

GRAPHY
OF THE
ALPHABETS
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THE ORIGIN OF THE DEVANAGARI ALPHABETS

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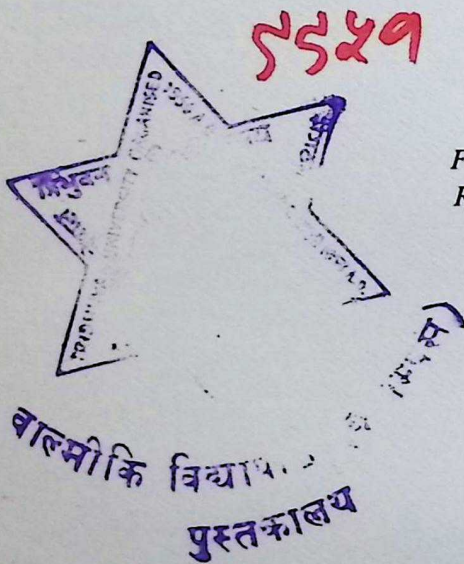
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CHAPTER I.

It has been a matter of considerable dispute whether the origin of the Devanāgarī Alphabet is indigenous or foreign. The majority of Oriental scholars have held the latter view and have based their theories on resemblances of the Devanāgarī to some of the foreign alphabets. Those letters of the Devanāgarī, which withstood this test, have been supposed to have undergone modifications, due either to cursive hands or to intentional changes made by the borrowers. Prof. Bühler was of opinion that the alphabet imported into India was made to assume native Indian forms and disguised so cleverly that one would swear it was a native invention.¹

An independent and indigenous origin for the Indian Alphabet has, however, been suggested by General Cunningham, Prof. Dowson, and others; but since their suggestion was not so much based on positive historical evidences as on the futility of the attempts of others to derive the alphabet from any foreign source, it found no supporters. That the above is a correct presentation of the case with regard to the theories and the evidence, on which the theories accounting for the origin of the Devanāgarī are based, will be clear from the following extract from Issac Taylor's *The Alphabet* :—

“Three theories have been propounded: Prinsep, followed by Otfried Müller, was inclined to attribute the peculiarities of the Aśoka Alphabet to Greek influences, an opinion upheld by M. Senart and M. Joseph Halévy. Dr. Wilson's guess was that Aśoka's Buddhists derived their letters from Greek or Phœnician models.

“A Semitic origin had, however, been already suggested by Sir William Jones in 1806 and supported by Koppin 1821. In 1834 Lepsius published his adhesion to this opinion, which was afterwards espoused by Weber, who was the first to bring forward in its favour arguments of real cogency. Benfey, Pott, Westergaard, Bühler, Max Müller, Friedrich Müller, Sayce, Whitney, and Lenormant have given a more or less hesitating adhesion to the Semitic hypothesis, but without adding any arguments of importance to those adduced by Weber. The most recent advocates on this side are Dr. Deeke, who has marred what might have proved a valuable contribution to the controversy by the introduction of the untenable theory of an ultimate derivation from the Assyrian Cuneiform, though the South Semitic Alphabet which may, he thinks, have been used in Persia or rather in Babylonia.

“A third theory, that of an indigenous origin, is upheld by specialists of nearly equal authority. This solution was first suggested by Lassen. He was followed by Mr. Edward Thomas, who decisively rejects every Semitic source, attributing the invention to the Dravidian races of Southern India. General Cunningham has propounded an elaborate scheme as to the mode in which, as he considers, the Aśoka Alphabet may have originated out of a primitive Indian picture writing. The final contribution to the argument is from the pen of Prof. Dowson, whose opinions are entitled to great consideration. His conclusion is ‘that the peculiarities of the Indian Alphabet demonstrate its independence of all foreign origin’ and that ‘it may be confidently urged that all probabilities and inferences are in favour of an independent invention.’

"A Greek source may be dismissed without serious examination, as it is beset by difficulties, both chronological and phonological, of a most formidable nature. Benfey's conjecture that it came direct from the Phœnicians is open to fatal objections. The trade of the Phœnicians with India, which commenced in the time of Solomon, ceased as early as the year 800 B. C. If the alphabet had been communicated at this early period, a variety of Indian Scripts would in all probability have sprung up during the long interval which elapsed before the time of Aśoka, whereas, in the third century B. C., a uniform alphabet prevailed over a vast Indian area. A further difficulty, which seems conclusive, is the want of any appreciable resemblance between the Aśoka Characters and the early Phœnician types.

"General Cunningham argues that if the Indians did not borrow their alphabet from the Egyptians, it must have been the local invention of the people themselves, for the simple reason that there was no other people from whom they could have obtained it. Their nearest neighbours were the peoples of Ariana and Persia, of whom the former used a Semitic Character, reading from right to left, and the latter a Cuneiform Character formed of separate detached strokes, which has nothing whatever in common with the compact forms of the Indian Alphabet, Mr. Thomas rejects a Semitic origin for the Aśoka Alphabet — (1) because of the different direction of the writing; (2) because of the insufficient resemblance of the forms of the letters; (3) because the Indo-Bactrian, which is of Semitic origin, is inferior to the Aśoka for the expression of the sounds of Indian languages. Prof. Dowson, in like manner, boldly challenges those who claim a foreign origin for the Indian Alphabet 'to show whence it came.'"

But in his own view of the matter, Issac Taylor goes as far as any of his colleagues declaring a foreign origin for the Indian Alphabet. He suggests some unknown South Semitic Alphabet as the probable source. He says that, in comparing the Indian and Sabean forms, it must be borne in mind that no South Semitic inscriptions have as yet been discovered of a date sufficiently remote to supply the absolute prototypes of the Aśoka letters. It must therefore be remembered that it is only possible to compare sister-alphabets derived from a common but unknown source. The actual ancestral type of the Aśoka Alphabet is unknown, but there is no reason why it should not be ultimately discovered in the unexplored regions of Oman, or Hadramaut, or among the ruins of Ormus, &c.²

While thus Issac Taylor became content with only pointing out the probable source of the Indian Alphabet and did not go so far as to make this or that alphabet the parent of the Indian, Prof. Bühler took the field and marshalled powerful arguments to identify all the twenty-two Semitic letters in the Brahmā Alphabet and to explain the formation of the numerous derivative signs which, in his opinion, the Indians were compelled to add. It is merely an appearance of resemblance on which he has based his theories. As to actual resemblance between the North Semitic and the oldest Indian Alphabet, there is none. He thinks that the forms of the alphabet were intentionally modified by the Brāhmins. He attributes these modifications to their pedantic formalism, a desire to have signs well suited for the formation of regular lines, and a strong aversion against all top-heavy characters. He says further on: "The natural result was that a number of the Semitic signs had to be turned topsy-turvy or to be laid on their sides, while the triangle or double angles occurring at the top of others had to be got rid of by some contrivance or other. A further change in the position of the signs had to be made when the Hindus began to write from the left to the right, as in Greek. Instances where the oldest position had been preserved are, however, met with both in borrowed and derivative signs."³

But the question is whether the desire to have letters well suited for the formation of a regular line precedes or succeeds the introduction of an alphabet. As the hypothesis presupposes

² Isaac Taylor, *The Alphabet*, Vol. II., p. 312.

³ Bühler, *The Origin of the Brahmā Alphabet*, p. 58.

DEVANAGARI ALPHABET

Plate I.

OLDEST SEMITIC AND INDIAN ALPHABETS.

	Archaic Phoenician	Mesa's Inscription	Assyrian weights	Intermediate forms	Original Brāhma	Derivative Brāhma
1	𐤀	𐤀			𑀓	𑀓
2	𐤁	𐤁		*𐤂	𑀔𑀕𑀖	𑀔
3	𐤃	𐤃		𐤄	𑀗	𑀗
4	𐤅	𐤅		𐤆𐤇	𑀙𑀚	𑀙𑀚𑀛𑀜𑀝𑀞𑀟𑀠
5	𐤈	𐤈	𐤉𐤊	𐤌𐤍	𑀡𑀢𑀣	
6		𐤎		𐤏𐤐	𑀥𑀦	𑀧𑀨𑀩𑀪𑀫𑀬𑀭𑀮𑀯𑀰𑀱𑀲𑀳𑀴𑀵𑀶𑀷𑀸𑀹𑀺𑀻𑀼𑀽𑀾𑀿
7	𐤐	𐤐		𐤒𐤓𐤔𐤕	𑀻𑀼𑀽𑀾𑀿	𑀻
8	𐤑	𐤑		*𐤗	𑀿𑁀𑁁	
9	𐤒		𐤓	𐤕	𑁃	𑁃𑁄
10	𐤔	𐤔		*𐤙	𑁇𑁈𑁉𑁊	
11	𐤕	𐤕		𐤚𐤛	𑁋𑁌	
12	𐤖	𐤖		𐤜𐤝𐤞	𑁍𑁎𑁏	𑁍
13	𐤗	𐤗		*𐤟	𑁑𑁒𑁓	𑁑.
14	𐤘	𐤘		*𐤠	𑁕	𑁕𑁖
15	𐤙𐤚	𐤙	𐤛	*𐤡	𑁗	𑁗𑁘𑁙𑁚𑁛𑁜
16	𐤛	𐤛		𐤣	𑁡𑁢𑁣𑁤𑁥𑁦	𑁧𑁨𑁩𑁪𑁫𑁬𑁭𑁮𑁯𑁰𑁱𑁲𑁳𑁴𑁵𑁶𑁷𑁸𑁹𑁺𑁻𑁼𑁽𑁾𑁿
17	𐤜	𐤜		𐤥	𑁇	𑁇
18	𐤝	𐤝		*𐤦	𑁉𑁊𑁋	𑁉𑁊
19	𐤞	𐤞		𐤧𐤨	𑁍𑁎	
20	𐤟	𐤟		𐤩𐤪𐤫𐤬	𑁑𑁒𑁓𑁔	
21	𐤭	𐤭	𐤮	𐤯𐤰𐤱𐤲	𑁡𑁢𑁣𑁤	
22	𐤳	𐤳	𐤴𐤵	𐤶𐤷𐤸𐤹	𑁇𑁈𑁉𑁊	

Vide Bühler's *Indian Brāhma Alphabet*, Plate I. and p. 58ff., and also Bühler's *Indian Palaeography*, p. 11.

an alphabet, and as that kind of desire must necessarily be the result of long experience of disadvantages arising from writing in irregular lines, it follows that that desire is subsequent to the introduction of writing. Then where are those top-heavy Semitic letters which must, if they had been borrowed at all, have been in use in India prior to chopping off their tops, as imagined by Prof. Bühler? To hold that this process went on simultaneously with the borrowing of Semitic letters and the manipulation of derivatives from them, is an assumption beyond the sphere of science or history. Anyhow, the difference between the North Semitic and the Devanāgarī Alphabets can more easily be perceived than any semblance of resemblance between them. How far Prof. Bühler strains his arguments to explain away the actual differences and endeavours to establish some connection between the alphabets will be clearly seen from Plate I.

As my theory of the indigenous origin of the Devanāgarī Alphabet is based not so much on negative evidence disproving the theories of foreign origin held by others, as on positive documentary evidence, it is quite unnecessary for me to deal at length with the fallacies in the arguments of Prof. Bühler. The only apology for my attempt to disturb the conviction of Oriental scholars lies in the abundance of material which, while explaining all that is left untouched by Prof. Bühler and others, and throwing a flood of light on the origin of Tantric literature, not inferior in its bulk to any branch of Sanskrit literature, provides us with a fairer and a more reliable solution of the origin of the Devanāgarī than the Egyptian Papyrus scrolls do regarding the rise of the Phœnician or Semitic Alphabets.

Prof. Bühler has not explained, and could not, if he persisted in his theory, have explained why the Indian Alphabet has been called by such names as Brāhmī, Mātrikā, Devanāgarī, &c., and why each individual character of the alphabet has been designated by the name *akshara*. Moreover, the fact of each letter of the Devanāgarī having one or two dozen names — names which signify one or the other of the Hindu gods or goddesses — cannot, if Prof. Bühler's conclusions are to be accepted, admit of any satisfactory explanation.

The fact is that just as idols are now worshipped, so pictorial symbols of gods or goddesses were objects of worship in ancient India. As they called their goddess Mātrī, mother of the world, the symbol which stood for her has been called Mātrikā, picture of the mother. Just as in the words, Rāmaka, Lakshmaṇaka, &c., the suffix expresses, according to the rule of Pāṇini (5-3-96), the picture of Rāma, Lakshmaṇa, &c., so the suffix *ka* in Mātrikā must express no other meaning than the picture of the mother. But as this kind of recognition, even in words of the distinction between symbols and the symbolised, died out in the course of time, the very names of gods or goddesses were, with no distinguishing mark, applied to their symbols. Hence, the names of Vedic gods, Akshara, Brāhmā, &c., became the names of the pictures as well. It is a well-known fact that names of gods were intentionally applied to goddesses and that the names of goddesses were *vice versa* applied to gods. This interchange of names might, perhaps, be due to the influence of the Monistic doctrine elaborated both in the later portions of the *Vedas* and in the early *Upanishads*, as well as to the fact that the Creator of the world was, as we shall see, worshipped as an hermaphrodite deity.

On the plate or leaf, on which the hieroglyphics were written for worship, some big circles and triangles were drawn, and the symbols of gods or goddesses were inscribed in the middle of such figures. The whole combination of the symbols and the circles has been, in the words of the *Taittirīya Upanishad*, called the City of the Gods, देवानां नगरम्.⁴ Hence, it stands to reason that the Indian Alphabet, many letters of which can, as we shall see, be identified with these hieroglyphics, has been called the Devanāgarī, or the Alphabet derived from the city of the gods. Hence, it is that the letters of the Devanāgarī came to bear the names of the hieroglyphics, which, in their turn, had appropriated to themselves the names of gods and goddesses.

⁴ 1, 27; 1, 31. *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*.

The symbols were coloured with saffron powder, bile of a cow or blood. The colouring process was called *lepa* or *lipi*, from the root 'to lip,' 'to daub.' The attempt to derive the Sanskrit word *lipi* from the Semitic *dipi*, to write, seems to be far-fetched, and cannot be philologically supported. Such an attempt can only find its support in the theory of the Semitic origin of the Devanâgarî.

The origin of the Indian hieroglyphics.

The Monistic doctrine, so elaborately preached in the later portions of the *Rig-Veda*, the *Atharva-Veda*, and the earlier *Upanishads*, seems to have exercised so much influence over the minds of the ancient Hindus, that they came to regard the Universe as identical with its Creator. Each of the two constituents of the Universe, Pindânda, microcosm, and Brahmânda, macrocosm, was further separately considered as one with Brahmâ, the Creator. Of this purport is the passage in Hymn XI. 8, 30, of the *Atharva-Veda* :—

“The waters, the gods, the Virâj with Brahmâ entered into man. Brahmâ entered into his body. Prajâpati presides over his body. The sun occupied the eye and the wind the breath of man. Then the gods gave his other soul to Agni, fire. Wherefore one who knows man thinks ‘this is Brahmâ’; for all the gods are in him as cows in a stable.”

The ancient Hindus felt, therefore, no difficulty whatever in picturing to their minds the form of either the macrocosm, or its Creator, in terms of the members of human body. The sky was believed to be his head; the atmosphere, his lungs; the fiery region, i. e., the region where the sun appears, his belly; the cloudy region, his waist and loins; and the ears, his legs. But this kind of notion regarding the form of god did not, as will be presently seen, drive them at once to contrive a complete picture of the Creator in human likeness; but only helped them to have for worship some tangible symbols, drawn after the models of the five divisions of human body, corresponding to the so-called five elements. (See Plate VII.)

The *Kulaprakâśatantra* says :—

आकाशमण्डलं धूमं वर्तुलं परिकीर्तितम्
 षट्कोणमण्डलं वायोः कृष्णषड्विन्दुनाञ्छितम्.
 सस्वस्तिकं त्रिकोणं तु रक्तं वहेस्तु मण्डलम्.
 अर्धचन्द्रमातिस्वच्छं पद्मद्वयविराजितम्.
 आप्यमण्डलमाख्यातं चतुरस्रं महेश्वरी.
 अष्टवज्ज्युतं पीतं धरामण्डलमीश्वरी.
 तत्तद्बीजसमायुक्तं मण्डलं पूजयेत्क्रमात्.
 तत्तद्गुणेन निर्माय द्वयेण परमेश्वरी.

‘The sky is said to be blue and circular. The atmosphere is represented by a six-petaled figure containing within it six dots. A red triangle with a *svastika* figure in it, is the region of fire. A bright-white semi-circle, decked with two lotus symbols, is the sphere of water. A brown rectangular figure, O Goddess, with eight symbols of Vâjra, the weapon of Indra, is the globe of the earth. Having drawn all the above figures with the symbols of their seeds (*bija*), O Goddess, one should worship them.’ (See Plate VII.)

The *Sivârchana Chandrika* is still more plain in its description of the identity of the Universe with its Creator or with human-body. It says :—

पादाभ्यां जानुपर्यन्तं चतुरस्रं सवज्जकम्.
 जान्वोरानाभि चन्द्रार्धनिभं पद्मद्वयसमायुतम्.

 नाभितः कण्ठपर्यन्तं त्रिकोणं रक्तवर्णकम्.

 कण्ठाद्भूमध्यपर्यन्तं कृष्णं वायोस्तु मण्डलम्.

 भूमध्याद्भ्रूजरन्ध्रान्तं वर्तुलं ध्वजनाञ्छितम्.

‘A rectangular figure with symbols of Vājra represents the part of the body beginning from the legs as far as the knees. A semi-circle with two lotus symbols represents the part from the knees as far as the navel. A red triangle represents the portion from the navel to the neck. A black figure represents the part from the neck to the middle of the brows. A circle with the symbol of a flag represents the head, stretching from the middle of the brows to the *brahmarandhra*, a hole supposed to be at the centre of the head.’ (See Plate VII.)

These symbols of the so-called five elements, which constitute the Universe, are evidently approximate representations of the five divisions of human body, which are believed to correspond to those elements in nature. The ancient Hindus were, therefore, satisfied with this kind of invention of some tangible form for their god. It is probable that in this way the worship of idols, i. e., worship of gods in human likeness, originated. Anyhow, it is certain that long before idols were set up in India, hieroglyphics of the above or similar description were objects of worship. There is reason to believe that before the time⁵ of Yāska, the author of *Nirukta*, there were no idols in existence in India, for he mentions the prevalence in his time of endless controversies as to whether gods have any form or not.⁶ It may, therefore, be presumed that before his time hieroglyphics were the only objects of worship with the exception of fire, and that those hieroglyphics were, as pointed out above, paving the way for the formation of the pictures of gods in human likeness. There is no reason to believe that the people of old, however ignorant and savage they might have been, had the audacity to presume that gods had the same form as they themselves had. It is only an indirect process of representing gods with symbols that led them to think that gods might not unnaturally have the same form as man. Idols appear to have sprung up in India in the 4th or 5th century B. C., for while commenting on the *sūtra* (5-3-99) of Pāṇini, Patanjali mentions the manufacture and sale of idols as the invention of the Maurya princes who lived 327 to 180 B. C.

While Prof. Max Müller held that the worship of idols in India was a secondary formation, a later degradation of the more primitive worship of ideal gods, Dr. Bollenson found clear references in the hymns to images of the gods. He writes “from the common appellation of the gods as *divo-naras*, men of the sky, or simply *naras* (*lares*), men, and from the epithet *nṛpeśas*, having the form of men (R.-V. III., 4, 5), we may conclude that the Indians did not merely in imagination assign human forms to their gods, but also represented them in a sensible manner. Thus, in R.-V. II. 33, 9, a painted image of Rudra is described :—

स्थिरेभिरङ्गैः पुरुरूप उमः
बभुवुश्चेभिः पिपिशे हिरण्यैः ।

‘With strong limbs, many formed, awful, brown, he is painted with shining golden colours.’

“R.-V. I. 25, 13 (where it is said of Varuṇa that, ‘wearing a golden coat of mail, he veils himself in his radiance; spies sit round him’) appears also to refer to a sensible representation. . . . still clearer appears the reference to representations in the form of an image in V. 52, 15 :—

न मन्वानाः एषां देवान् अश्च-

‘I now pray to the gods of these Maruts.’

“Here it seems that the Maruts are distinguished from their gods, i. e., from their images Besides the common expression ‘Vapus,’ ‘Tanu,’ ‘Rūpa’ (body and form), there is in the oldest language one which properly denotes an image of the gods, viz., *Sandriṣ*.⁷”

⁵ 6th or 7th century B. C.

⁶ J. A. S. B., Vol. III., p. 331.

⁷ Journal of the German Oriental Society, XXII. 587 ff., quoted in Muir's Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V., p. 453.

As has been briefly pointed out above and will be shown at some length later on, these and other references to visible gods must be taken to apply more to hieroglyphics than to any idols in complete human likeness.

The description of the Hindu hieroglyphics, the use of which in worship is not a feature peculiar to one or other of the many sects of the Hindus, can be found at large in Tantric or Āgama literature. Different kinds of hieroglyphics are described in the literature of the Sakti worshippers, the Saivas, the Vaishnavas, the Jainas and even the Buddhists. It is not now possible to ascertain whether the Jainas and the Buddhists borrowed the Tantric practices during the decline of their respective creeds, or whether they had them in common with the Brāhmans. The latter view is the more probable, inasmuch as mystic figures appear to have been carved in ancient Buddhistic architecture here and there in India. But, as the hieroglyphics which gave birth, as we shall see, to the Devanāgarī Alphabet, are nowhere described so fully as in Tantric writings, it is necessary to turn our attention to a brief survey of that literature and its date.

The Tantric literature is as large as, if not larger than, any other branch of Sanskrit literature. Innumerable works composed in the style of aphorisms, poetry and prose, are still available. Many of them are believed to have been composed by god Śiva, because they are in the form of a dialogue between Śiva and his consort Pārvatī. There are also some *sūtras* still available attributed to Paraśurāma, Agastya and Gaṇḍapāda. There is, perhaps, no Brāhman philosopher, who was not a follower of the Tantric system in one or another of its various forms. Thanks to the printing press, a number of Tantric texts, with or without commentaries, fathered upon several reputed authors, have already been printed. But still a large mass of Tantric literature is lying unprinted in the many libraries of India, both private and public.

The main theme of the Tantric literature appears to have been originally the worship of the combined form of Śiva and Sakti. In its earliest aspect it appears to have been no other than Phallic worship, since the god Śiva and the goddess Sakti are described in authoritative Tantric texts as being represented by Phallic symbols. Śiva is regarded the male Creative principle, and Sakti the female:—

ब्रह्माण्डादिकयाहन्तां तां वन्दे सिद्धमात्मकाम्
यदेकादशमाधारं बीजं कोणत्रयात्मकम्.

P. 2, *Kādimata*.

‘I bow to the goddess, who is the mother of the blessed, who pervades the whole Universe, who is the eleventh basis (of the world), and who is the seed in the form of a triangle.’

त्रिकोणरूपा योनिस्तु
शक्तिरेकादशस्थाने स्थित्वा सूते जगत्त्रयम्.
विश्वयोनिरिति ख्याता सा विश्वोद्धाररूपकम्

Chap. X., *Jñānārṇava*.

‘The goddess Sakti, taking the form of a triangle and being the source (of the world) takes her seat on the eleventh pedestal and brings forth the three worlds. She is, therefore, known as the source of the Universe and the ten incarnations of the god Viṣṇu.’

While Sakti is thus said to be represented by a triangular symbol, the symbol to represent Śiva (see Plate VII.) is thus described:—

विन्दुद्वयान्तरे दण्डाद्विश्वरूपो मणिप्रभः । .

Part II., *Nityāśhodāśikārṇava*.

‘A rod between two dots shining as a precious stone is the form of Śiva.’

अण्डद्वयमध्यवर्तिनी सीरा.

Part II., *Varivasyārahasya*.

‘The plough-share between two eggs (is Śiva).’

अण्डद्वयस्थानीयौ द्वौ विन्दुः सिरास्थानाया रेखा. शिवो मुष्कद्वयमध्यवर्ती नाडी मणिः पञ्चरागः इति साम्प्रदायिकी व्याख्या,

Pp. 10—12, Commentary of Bhāskarānanda on the *Varivasyūdrahasya*.

‘Two dots represent the two eggs referred to above. And a straight line represents the plough-share. The ruby-like nerve (nervous stone) between two testicles is Siva. This is traditional commentary.’

It is more than probable that in its earliest form this kind of Phallic worship was purely symbolic and simple. But in the course of time it is likely to have become a means to the sensualistic clergy of the Tantric faith for realising their lascivious purposes. For there are Tantric texts which teach the abominable practice of worshipping naked women. Abominable as it was, this worship, with its revelries of drinking, flesh-eating, and sensual excesses, had the power to attract and hold under its sway a number of people. Thus, when it grew in importance and in extent, in spite of its revolting practices, a few Brāhman philosophers, who were pure in life and thought, seem to have thought it proper to put down the mischievous practice with all the means in their power. So they formulated a right form of Tantric worship under the name of **Dakṣiṇāchāra**, right-hand worship. They called the other kind of worship as **Vāmāchāra**, left-hand practice, and condemned it as leading to hell, though it might appear fruitful in this world. They composed what is called the *Subhāgama Panchaka*, five auspicious *Āgamas*. These *Āgamas* are attributed to five authors of Purāṇic fame, Vasishṭha, Sanaka, Suka, Sanandana, and Sanatkumāra. The *sūtras* of Agastya and of Gaudapāda, and the works of Sankarāchārya and of many other Brāhman philosophers teach and propound the **Dakṣiṇāchāra**. In propounding this, without leaving its original symbolical aspect, they incorporated with it almost all the doctrines of their Monistic philosophy. In its two aspects, that of **Dakṣiṇāchāra** full of higher and nobler ideas and that of **Vāmāchāra** full of abominable practices revolting to philosophers, but attractive to the mob, this worship of the hermaphrodite deity called **Siva-Sakti** counted a vast number of people among its followers, and the other ancient sects of the Hindus could not stand aloof. They had either to incorporate some Tantric doctrines into their own religious texts or to see the followers of their own faith dwindle in number. They seem to have chosen the first alternative and thus arose various systems of Tantric worship, having a few of the Tantric doctrines common to all. It is probable that at the same time, the single worship of Siva-Sakti branched off into two different kinds of worship, that of Siva under the names **Kāma**, **Rudra**, **Hara**, &c., and that of Sakti under the names **Durgā**, **Kāmī**, **Pārvatī**, &c. But common to all the systems of the Tantric cult, whether ancient or medieval, is the worship of mysterious figures and the recitation of mystic syllables known as **mantras**. These **mantras** consist of meaningless monosyllabic sounds, formed out of single or compound alphabetic letters. Another peculiar feature, common to all the systems of the Tantric cult, is the designation of alphabetic letters composing the **mantras** by the names of gods or goddesses. For instance, the **mantra** called the **Panchadaśī**, which is, as the name suggests, composed of fifteen alphabetic letters, such as *ka, ē, ī, la, hrīm*; *ha, sa, ka, ha, la, hrīm*; *sa, ka, la, hrīm*, is thus described by Sankarāchārya, in his *Saundaryalaharī* :—

शिवशक्तिः कामः क्षितिरथ रविश्क्षितकिरणः
स्मरो हंसस्तव च परामारहरयः
अमी हल्लेखाभिस्तिष्ठभिरवसानेषु घटिताः
भजन्ते वर्णास्ते तव जननि नामावयवताम्

‘O, Mother, the letters known as (i) Siva, Sakti, Kāma and Kshiti; (ii) then the letters known as Ravi, Sītakiraṇa (the moon), Smara (Kāma), Hamsa (the sun), and Sakra (Indra = Kshiti); (iii) and then the letters known as Para (Sakti), Māra (Kāma), and Hari (Indra); — these letters together with three *hrillekḥās*, *hrīm*-sounds put at the end of each of the three groups, form the constituents of thy name.’

The names of these letters are, as we shall see, the same as, or are synonymous with, the names of the hieroglyphics from which the letters have been derived.

Before describing the hieroglyphics or ideograms, it is necessary to dwell at some length on the probable date of the composition of Tantric texts in general and of the origin of the Tantric cult in particular. It is presumed by many Oriental scholars that the worship of Siva or Sakti originated subsequent to the beginnings of the Christian era and that Tantric texts dealing with that worship are, therefore, the productions of medieval mystics. It is probable that many or almost all the Tantric texts are not earlier than the first four centuries before the Christian era, inasmuch as most of the texts presuppose the derivation of the Devanâgarî Alphabet from ancient ideograms long before that. Still, the traditions preserved in them regarding the development of Sakti-worship from prehistoric phallic worship are incontrovertible proof that the worship of the goddess Sakti in the form of hieroglyphics preceded by many centuries the worship of the same goddess in the form of terrible idols. The earliest authentic proof as to the prevalence of the worship of Sakti in the form of idols is furnished by an inscription on the Bhitari Lat of the Gupta period. The inscription has been partially restored and translated in page 8, Vol. VI., *J. A. S. B.*, by the Rev. W. H. Mill, D.D., Principal of Bishop's College. The text, together with the translation and historical remarks based upon it, is as follows :—

न विहित मनदान्मा तान्त्रधीर्दक्षीकीर्तिः
अविनतपलसात्ता विक्रमेण क्रमेण.

‘Possessed of clear insight into the profound wisdom of the *Tāntras*, with a spirit of unceasing silence (on their incommunicable mysteries and in accordance with their precept and discipline) mangling the flesh of the refractory in successive victories.’

सदार्थितस्कन्दरुद्ररत्नाकरार्क नेतुः
महेशप्रतिगुप्तः
सततं सेवते मूर्तिमिमां यद्वच्च भूपतिः
रुद्रेणन्द्रेणाद्य देवो स मतः प्रणयपण्यधीरम्.

‘Whatever prince in this place perpetually worships this sacred image, is considered by Rudra (Siva) himself as one whose understanding is ennobled and rendered praiseworthy by his affectionate devotion, even in the land of Indra and other celestials.’

‘And here I must recall an observation that I have hazarded elsewhere, when commenting on the Allahabad Inscription (p. 268, Vol. III., *J. A. S. B.*), that the worship of the Saktis, with its existing mysteries and orgies, was most probably unknown in India at the date of that monument. The terms, in which that species of devotion is spoken of, about a century after, in the second of the metrical stanzas in the Bhitari Inscription, show that the same system was even then dominant and sufficiently powerful and seducing to enlist kings among its votaries. And while this (if I am correct in supposing the age of the Gupta dynasty to be somewhere between the first and the ninth centuries of our era) may be among the earliest authentic notices of that mode of worshipping Bhairava and Kâli, the mention of it at all furnishes an additional proof to my mind of the impossibility of referring these monuments to the earlier age of Chandragupta Maurya or of Alexander the Great and the century immediately following.’

It is clear from the above Inscription that Tantric worship was as predominant as it is now in the third and fourth centuries A. D., when the Gupta princes ruled over Northern India. But it is surprising to note an assumption in the remarks of Dr. Mill on the texts above quoted, that the mere mention of Tantric worship in this or any other inscription is sufficient proof that that monument must be subsequent to the period of the Maurya dynasty. For it is an historical fact to be borne in mind that there is no religious system in the world that has not its basis in the remotest antiquity. Innovations and changes may be made in all religions now and then, but the various root-principles on which different religions are based can be traced to a great antiquity. The

root-principle on which the Tantric system is based is phallic worship and the traditions connected with it. The various symbols and mysterious figures used in connection with this phallic worship, and the traditions and practices of the witchcraft surrounding it, go as far back as the *Atharva-Veda* and perhaps still earlier. Bhâskarananda, who was one of the followers of Tantric worship and an authority on Tantric matters, writes thus at the commencement of his commentary on the *Tripuropanishad* :—

श्री साङ्ख्यायनकल्पसूत्रविधिभिः कर्माणि ये कुर्वते
येषां शाकलसूत्रमन्त्रनिचयः कौशितकी ब्राह्मणम् ।
तैराराधकमध्यमन्त्रविततिः या पठ्यते बहुचैः
क्षुम्भिष्योऽद्यभिर्महोपनिषदं व्याचक्ष्महे तां वयम् ।

‘We comment on that great *Upanishad*, the sixteen verses of which are recited by the followers of the *Rig-Veda* in the middle of their ritualistic performances. These followers of the *Rig-Veda* perform their ritual in accordance with the teachings of the *Kalpasûtra* of the revered Sâmkhyâyana, recite the mass of *mantras* collected in the *Sâkala sûtra*, and observe the formulas of the *Kausîtaki Brâhmana*.’

The “great *Upanishad*” referred to in the stanza is the *Tripuropanishad*, in which is found the description of the symbols representing Sakti or Bhaga :—

द्वामण्डला द्वा स्तना विम्बमेकं
मुखं चाधस्त्रीणि गुहासरनानि.
कामीकलां काम्यरूपां विदित्वा
नरो जायते कामरूपद्वय कामः

‘Two circles are two breast-nipples. One circle is the face. Below them are three cave-like abodes (triangle). On knowing this as the enchanting form of Sakti (Kâmi-kalâ, the body of Kâmi), one not only attains that enchanting form which is desired by all, but also becomes Kâma himself.’ (See Plate VI.)

भगदशक्तिर्भगवान्काम ईशः
उभा शक्ताराविह सौभगानाम्
समप्रधानौ समसत्त्वौ समोत्तमौ
समशक्तिरजरा विद्वद्योनिः।

Tripuropanishad.

‘Bhaga is Sakti and Kâma is Siva, combined with Bhaga. Both of them are dispensers of all kind of prosperity. Both, being inseparably interwoven together, are of equal rank, might and power, eternal, and the source of the Universe.’

When such a scholar as Bhâskarananda says that these verses, pregnant with phallic ideas, together with the other verses of the *Tripuropanishad*, are recited during their ceremonies by the followers of the *Rig-Veda*, there can be no doubt that the traditions connected with phallic worship have continued uninterrupted from the time of the *Rig-Veda* down to the present day. There is reason to believe that there existed two kinds of phallic worship: the one a symbolical or nature-worship, like that of Indra, Varuna, Agni, &c., and the other in a grotesque form. To the poets of the *Rig-Veda*, whose minds rose on high above the moon, the sun, and the sky, and saw behind them some divine principle modifying the face of nature, there appeared an eternal union of divine principles of opposite sex causing the Universe, and phallic worship was to the poets no more than a tribute of heartfelt reverence to a mental image, or an actual symbol of Prajâpati :—

विष्णुर्योनिं कल्पयतु
स्वष्टा रूपाणि पिशतु ।
आसिंचतु प्रजापतिः
धाता गर्भं रधातु ते ॥

This is the hymn (185, X., R.-V.) with which every Brâhman bridegroom is required to address his bride on the occasion of nuptials :—

May the god Vishṇu prepare thy womb;
May Tvashtri manufacture colours;
May Prajâpati sprinkle (the seed);
And may the protector bring up the embryo.

But in the hands of common multitude, who were not gifted with such mental faculties, phallic worship appears to have assumed a most grotesque and detestable type, which is plainly referred to by Lolla in his commentary on the *Saundaryalaharî* of Sankara, and which it is loathsome to describe here.⁸ It is this abominable worship of Kâma, which the Rig-Vedic poet seems to have had in his mind, while condemning those whose god was Śiśna⁹ (*phallus*). It may, however, be urged that, with a view to give a touch of antiquity to their doctrine, which came under evil repute with the followers of the *Vedânta* and other philosophical systems, such Tantric worshippers as Bhâskarânanda and others attempted to trace their doctrine to the *Vedas*. But a glance over the mystic figures and witchcraft treated of at length, both in Tantric texts and the *Atharva-Veda*, and a consideration of the development of Tantric doctrines from the phallic worship, described in the *Atharva-Veda* but condemned in the *Rig-Veda*, will sufficiently prove that Tantric worship is of remote antiquity.

Verses 32—34 of Hymn 2, X, of the *Atharva-Veda* are held as authoritative texts for the Tantric Srichakra (Plate II.), which is formed of mystic circles and triangles :—

अष्टा चक्रा नवद्वारा देवानां पुरयोध्या.
तस्यां हिरण्ययः कोशः स्वर्गो ज्योतिषावृतः ।
तस्मिन् हिरण्यये कोशे व्यरे त्रिप्रतिष्ठिते ।
तस्मिन्यद्व्येकाक्षं आत्मन्वैतत् तद्वै ब्रह्मविदो विदुः ।
प्रभ्राजमानां हरिणीं यज्ञसा सम्परी वृताम् ।
पुरं हिरण्ययीं ब्रह्म आविवेशापराजिताम् ।¹⁰

‘The impregnable city of the gods consists of eight circles and nine triangles (*dvâra*). Within it is a golden cell celestial and invested with light. In the triangle (*tryara*) and three dots (*tripratishthita*) within that cell, resides the One Eye. Those who know Brâhma think that this Eye is *âtman*. For into that impregnable city, which is resplendent, bright and invested with renown, Brâhma has entered.’

In his great commentary on the *Nityâ Shodasîkârṇava* called the *Setubandha*, Bhâskarânanda has interpreted the words *tryara* and *tripratishthita* as a triangle and three dots and, as the words *triṅgaṇa*, *tryâśra*, *tryara*, *tripura*, *śringâtaka*, &c., are used in the sense of a triangle in all Tantric texts, there is no reason to doubt his interpretation. Both Bhâskarânanda in his *Setubandha* and Lolla in his commentary on *Saundaryalaharî* have interpreted the word *dvâra* as a triangle. If the above and other parallel passages¹¹ of the *Atharva-Veda* and the *Taittirîya Âraṇyaka* are, as they must be, taken to mean certain mystic figures actually drawn for worship, like those of the Srichakra of the Tantric cult, there can be no reason to call into question the above interpretations. The authorities on Tantric matters are all unanimous in finding in these passages a clear description of the Srichakra and of Kâmi-kalâ referred to above. It is not, however, certain whether the process of drawing the *chakra* at the time of the *Atharva-Veda* was the same as it is now. (See Plates VI. and VII.)

⁸ P. 130, Mysore Oriental Library Edition.

⁹ *Rig-Veda*, VII, 21, 3; 5.

¹⁰ Compare I., 27 — *Tai. Âraṇyaka*; V., 28, 11; XI, 4, 22 — *Atharva-Veda*; and XIV., 987 — *Mahabharata*.

¹¹ V. 28, 11 and XI, 4, 22, A.-V.; I. 27, *Tai. Ar.*

The eight *chakras* are thus described in the *Bhairavayāmala*, quoted by Lolla in his commentary on *Saundaryalaharī*¹² :—

चतुर्भिर्दिशवचक्रैश्च शक्तिचक्रैश्च पञ्चभिः ।
नवचक्रैश्च संसिद्धं श्रीचक्रं शिवयोर्वपुः ।
त्रिकोणमष्टकोणं च दशकोणद्वयं तथा ।
चतुर्दशारं चैतानि शक्तिचक्राणि पञ्च च ।
बिन्दुश्चाष्टदलं पञ्च पञ्च षोडशपत्रकम् ।
चतुरश्रं च चत्वारि शिवचक्राण्यनुक्रमात् ।

‘Four *chakras* presided over by Siva and five *chakras* presided over by Sakti — these nine figures constitute the Srichakra, which is the abode of Siva and Sakti. They are a triangle, an eight-petaled figure, two ten-petaled figures, and one fourteen-petaled figure. These five are the *chakras* of Sakti. One small circle (*bindu*), an eight-petaled figure, one sixteen-petaled figure, and one square form the four Siva-chakras.’

These figures are ordinarily drawn as in Plate II. and overlap each other. Lolla accounts for the difference in number between the Atharva-Vedic and the Tantric *chakras*, as enumerated above, by counting the two ten-petaled figures as one and making only eight distinct *chakras* in conformity to the number enumerated both in the *Atharva-Veda* and the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*.

After drawing this Srichakra on a plate or a leaf, the devotee is required to inscribe in its centre the figure of Kāmî-kalâ (Plate VI.) :—

त्रिकोणे वैन्दवस्थाने अधोवक्त्रं विचिन्तयेत् ।
बिन्दोरुपरिभागे तु वक्त्रं संचिन्तय साधकः ।
तदुपर्येव वक्षोजद्वितयं संस्मरेद्बुधः ।
तदुपर्येव योनिं च क्रमशो भुवनेश्वरीम् ।¹³

‘In the interior of the triangle, which is the seat of Bindu, the devotee has to meditate upon the lower face (of Sakti). Having meditated on the face drawn above the Bindu (dot) as well, he has to recollect the breast-nipples above the face. Then by meditating on a triangular symbol of creation (*yonî*), he has to form gradually the picture of the Queen of the World in his mind.’

Clearly the picture required to be meditated upon in the above verses is no other than Kāmî-kalâ turned upside down. With such clues as these afforded by Tantric texts, one can clearly understand what is meant by the words *ashtâchakra*, *tryara*, *tripratishthita* and *kośa* in the above passages of the *Atharva-Veda*. Nor do the traditional interpretations of these words clash with their derivative or literal sense. What, in the absence of the light thus thrown by Tantric texts and tradition on the obscure passages of the *Atharva-Veda*, would have appeared more than mystic becomes now as clear and intelligible as one could wish. We can clearly understand the common sense and simplicity with which the poets of the *Atharva-Veda* drew eight circles or triangles to represent the city of their gods and three dots and a triangle to represent their goddess. It is not only unreasonable, but also more than mystic, to think that such practical men as the Vedic bards talked of only imaginary *chakras*, gates, cities, or triangles, and never had those figures in a tangible form before them for worship. Although the drawing of the Srichakra is quite simple compared with the elaborate and complicated forms of sacrificial altars which were and are still, as described in the *Sulbasûtras*, constructed with mathematical precision, it may be that the Atharva-Vedic Ashtâchakra was quite different from, and perhaps simpler than, the Srichakra; for, perhaps, owing to the particular honour in which the Srichakra is held among other *chakras*, Bhâskarananda and Lolla might have taken the Vedic text to mean the Srichakra alone. It is, however, usual among Tantric worshippers to have simpler figures for

¹² P. 22, Mysore O. L. Edition. Also compare stanza 11 of *Saundaryalaharī* and quotations in the commentary in the same stanza.

¹³ Quotations from *Chatuṣṣatī* in p. 65, *Saundaryalaharī*, M. O. L. Edition.

worship. In the *Kadimata*, a Tantric MS. which, as its name implies, is an authoritative text of those, whose *mantra* begins with the syllable, *ka*, the following *chakra* is described :—

पञ्च चतुर्दशदलं बहिर्वृत्तद्वयं तथा ।
लिखित्वा कर्णिकामध्ये योनिं मायोदरां लिखेत् ।
दलेष्वपि तयाशक्तेश्चतुर्दशसु संलिखेत् ।
भगमालां मध्यशक्त्यामावाह्याभ्यर्चयेद्ब्रह्मिः

‘Having drawn a fourteen-petaled circle within two concentric circles, one shall draw within it a triangle containing a phallic symbol in the middle. In the fourteen petals of the figure of the goddess Sakti, a series of Bhaga-symbols, he shall also inscribe. Having invoked the presence of the goddess Sakti in the central symbol, he has to perform the external worship.’

Nor is there any mystery in the number eight of the *chakras* and the number nine of the *dvāras*, holes or gates, for in his commentary on the *Bhāvanopaniṣad*, Bhāskarananda says:—

मूलाधारादिषट्कं मूर्ध्नाधस्तदहस्त्रदलकमले द्वे
लम्बिकामिति नवाधाराः¹⁴

‘The six *chakras*, — namely, (1) Mūlādhāra, prime support ; (2) Maṇipūra, the watery zone decked with precious stones ; (3) Svādhishṭhāna, one’s own seat ; (4) Anāhata, sounding though not struck ; (5) Viśuddhi, the zone of purification ; (6) and Ājñā, command — two thousand-petaled lotuses both below and above the six *chakras*, and the edge of the epiglottis form the nine *chakras*.’

Here leaving the epiglottis which is plainly a later addition, the eight *chakras* mentioned in the hymn may be taken to correspond to the six divisions of human body, the legs, the waist, the navel, the heart, the throat, and the brows. Of the two lotuses, one is for the god or goddess to stand upon and the other to wear on the head or to form the head. Not only are the *chakras* believed to correspond to human body, but also taken to represent the six divisions of the Universe, as already pointed out. As for the nine gates, they are enumerated in the same commentary thus :—

श्रोत्रचक्षुर्नासानां द्वयं द्वयम् ।
जिह्वागुह्यपायव एकैक इति¹⁵

‘Two, two gates in each of the organs, the ear, the eye and the nose. One gate in each of the organs, the tongue, the generative organ, and the anus.’

Nor are the words *Bhaga* and *Kāma*, so frequently used in the *Atharva-Veda*, devoid of the phallic sense which they convey in Tantric texts.

In the following Hymn,¹⁶ *Bhaga* is used in its ordinary sense devoid of any divine attribute:—

(1) As the wind tears this grass from the surface of the earth, thus do I tear thy soul, so that, thou woman shalt love, shalt not be averse to me.

(2) If ye, O two *Āśvins*, shall unite and bring together the loving pair, — united are the *Bhagas* of both of you (lovers), united the thoughts, united the purposes !

(3) When the birds desire to chirp, lustily desire to chirp, may my call go there as an arrow point upon the shaft !

(4) What is within shall be without ; what is without shall be within ! Take captive, O herb, the soul of the maidens endowed with every charm.

(5) Longing for a husband, this woman hath come, I have come longing for a wife. As a loudly neighing horse, I have attained to my good fortune (*Bhagena aham samāgamam*).

¹⁴ P. 239, *Bhāvanopaniṣad* printed along with the *Saundaryalahari*, M. O. L. Edition.

¹⁵ P. 34, *Bhāvanopaniṣad*, the same Edition.

¹⁶ II, 30, A-V.

Here the comparison of his attaining to his fortune with that of a loudly neighing horse undoubtedly suggests the exact meaning that is intended to be conveyed by the word Bhaga. While translating the above verses, Maurice Bloomfield says that Bhaga here seems to be used in a double meaning ('fortune' and 'vulva').

But in the following passages the word Bhaga is used in the sense of a goddess :—

(1) "Bhaga told me to marry a wife just in the same way as the Ásvins married the Sūrya, the Sun, who possesses a good productive quality." — 2, 82, 6, A.-V.

(2) "I invoke the peaceful Bhaga, so that she may endow you (loving pair) with harmony of mind and heart." — 2, 74, 6, A.-V.

As regards the god Kāma, he is invoked under a number of synonymous words, Prajāpati, Skambha, Vaitasa, &c. The word Vaitasa has been undoubtedly used in the sense of *virile membrum*. Prof. Muir says¹⁷ :— "In the *Rig-Veda* X. 95, 4, 5 (compare *Nirukta* III. 21) and *Satap. Br.* XI. 5, 1, 1, the word Vaitasa has the sense of *membrum virile*. Are we to understand the word Vaitasa (reed) in the same sense here, as denoting a Linga?" Also, while translating the Atharva-Vedic hymn addressed to Skambha or Brahmā, where the word Vaitasa is synonymously used with Brahmā, Prof. Muir entertains similar doubts. He says: "I know not whether this word has here its ordinary meaning or the same sense which is assigned to the word Vaitasa in *R.-V.* X. 95, 4, 5, which is addressed by Urvāsi to Purūravā; *Satap. Brāhmana* XI. 5, 1, 1, and *Nirukta* III. 21, and also *R.-V.*, IV. 58, 5; and *Satap. Br.* VII. 5, 2, 11."

I cannot see the reason why the phallic sense assigned to the word Vaitasa should be doubted when the whole Skambha Hymn becomes, if the word is taken in its phallic sense, intelligible, freed from all its mystery. The entire Hymn addressed to Skambha is full of such words as 'of this limb,' 'in which limb,' and 'from which limb,' &c. The use of these expressions can only be consistent with some pictorial form of the god drawn for worship. Then alone we can understand the catechetical method of identifying the several visible limbs of the picture with several constituents of the universe. To say that such demonstrative pronominal words as 'this,' 'of this,' &c., are not meant to refer to some visible objects at hand, is the same as saying that the Vedic bards were ignorant of the elementary rules of Sanskrit Grammar in daily use. It is not only violating Sanskrit Grammar, but also setting at naught the tradition preserved in all the Tantric texts of representing gods by pictorial symbols.

Following both grammar and tradition, the Skambha Hymn can be thus translated :— "In what member of this (*asya*) does austere fervour stand? In which member of this is the ceremonial contained? In what parts of this do religious observance and faith abide? In what member of this is truth established? From what member does *agni*, fire, blaze? From which does the wind blow? From which does the moon pursue her course traversing the mighty body of Skambha? In what member of this does the earth reside and in which member of this the atmosphere? In what member is the sky placed, and in which the space above the sky? Whither tending does the upward fire blaze? Whither tending does the wind blow? Tell, who is that Skambha to whom all devotees anxiously turn and into whom they enter? Whither tending, do the half months and the months in making up the year proceed? Tell that Skambha to whom the seasons and other divisions of the year advance? Whither tending do the two young females of diverse aspects, the day and night, hasten in unison? Tell that Skambha on whom the Prajāpati has supported and established all the worlds? How far did Skambha penetrate into that highest, lowest, and middle Universe, comprehending all forms which Prajāpati created. And how much of it was there which he did not penetrate? How far did Skambha penetrate into the past? And how much of the future lies in the face of this?"

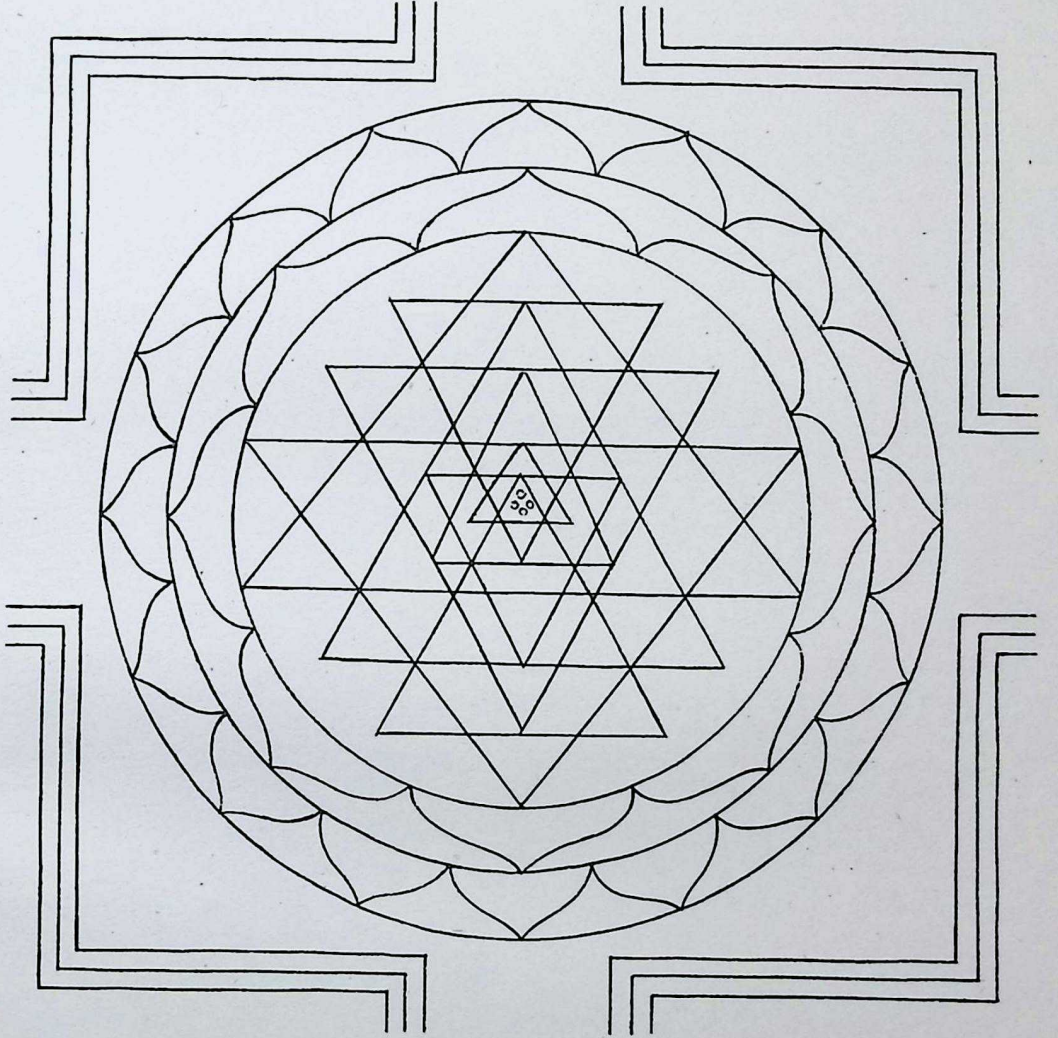
¹⁷ *Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. V., p. 384.

How far did Skambha penetrate into that one member which he made by thousands? Tell, who is that Skambha in whom men recognise the worlds and receptacles, waters and Brahmâ, and within whom are nonentity and entity? In whom austere fervour energising maintains its highest purity? In whom the ceremonial, faith, waters and Brahmâ himself are comprehended? In whom earth, atmosphere, sky, fire, moon, sun and wind are placed? In whose body all the thirty-three gods are contained? In whom the earliest Rishis, the Rik, the Sâmān, the Yajus, the earth and one Rishi reside? That Purusha in whom immortality and death are comprehended; in whom the oceans reside as the veins? That Skambha of whom the four regions are primeval arteries, and in whom sacrifice displaces its energy? They who know Brahmâ can understand the transcendental. He who knows the transcendental and also the Prajâpati, as well as those who know Brahmâ, can realise Skambha. Tell that Skambha of whom the fire is the head, the Angirasas the eye, and demons (Yâtus) are the limbs. Tell that Skambha of whom Brahmâ is said to be both the mouth and honeyed tongue, the Viraj the nadder? From whom they extracted the *Rig* and cut off the *Yajus*; of whom the *Sâma* verses are the heirs, and the *Atharva-Veda* the mouth. Men regard the standing branch of nonentity as paramount and those inferior men think of nonentity worship thy branch. Tell who is that Skambha in whom the Âdityas, Rudras, and Vasus are contained; on whom the past, the future, and all worlds are supported; whose treasure the thirty-three gods always guard. Who knows that treasure which ye guard, O gods? Where those gods who know Brahmâ worship the transcendental and he who sees that with his eyes will come to know Brahmâ. Mighty, indeed, are those gods who have sprung from nonentity. Other people say that one member of Skambha is nonentity. Where Skambha, generating, brought the ancient one into existence, they consider that that ancient is one member, Skambha. In whose members the thirty-three gods found their bodies. Those who know Brahmâ can understand those thirty-three gods. Men know the Hiranyagarbha to be supreme and ineffable, Skambha shed forth in the interior of the-world that gold (*hiranya*). In Skambha are contained the worlds, austere fervour, and the ceremonial. In Indra are contained the worlds, austere fervour, and the ceremonial. I know thee to be visible Indra (*Indram tvâ veda pratyaksham*). In Skambha is everything placed. Repeating the very name (the worshipper) invokes (thee) before the sun, before the dawn. For the unborn first sprang into being and attained to that independent power, than which nothing higher has ever been. Reverence to that greatest Brahmâ of whom the earth is the basis, the atmosphere the belly, and who made the sky his head; of whom the sun and the ever-renewed moon are the eyes; who made *agni* his mouth; of whom the wind formed two of the vital airs and Angirasas the eye, who made the regions his organs of sense. Skambha bears these two worlds, the earth and sky. Skambha bears the wide atmosphere. Skambha bears the six vast regions and has pervaded this entire Universe. Reverence to that greatest Brahmâ, who, born from austere toil and fervour, penetrated all the worlds; who made Soma to be alone. How is it that the wind does not rest? How is not the soul quiescent? Why do not the waters, seeking after truth, ever repose? The great being is absorbed in austere fervour in the midst of the world, on the surface of the waters. To whom all the gods are joined, as the branches around the trunk of a tree. Say who is that Skambha to whom the gods with hands, feet, voice, ear, eye, present continually an unlimited tribute. By whom darkness is dispelled. He is free from evil; in him are all the three luminaries which reside in Prajâpati. He who knows the golden reed standing in the waters is the mysterious Prajâpati — X. 7, A.-V.

Undoubtedly, the golden reed which the poet has taken to be visible Indra, can be no other than the ruby-like rod between two dots of Tantric literature. Neither is the word Skambha (= stambha = pillar = rod) less significant of the *linga*. Nor are the several limbs of Skambha, identified with the several constituents of the Universe, other than the symbols of the latter. Still more clearly does the Purusha Hymn (X. 2, A.-V.) establish the fact that at the time of the

DEVANAGARI ALPHABET

Plate II.



Śrīchakra.

Atharva-Veda, pictorial representations, more or less similar to those of Tantric literature, were actually made for worship. This hymn has already been quoted in part, so far as it deals with *chakras* and triangles. Prof. Muir, in his Sanskrit texts, has thus remarked¹⁸ on the hymn : —

“The *Atharva-Veda* contains a long hymn (X. 2) on the subject of Purusha, which does not throw much light on the conception of his character, but contains a number of curious ideas. The deity being conceived and described in this hymn as the man or male (*purusha*), — the great archetype and impersonation of that active energy of which men are the feeble representatives upon earth — the poet has been led to imagine the object of his adoration as invested with a visible form and with members analogous to those of the human frame, and he then goes on to speculate on the agency by which the different portions of Purusha's body could have been constructed, and the source from which he could have derived the various attributes through which he formed the Universe, and ordained the conditions under which its several departments exist. The minute questions regarding the members of Purusha, with which the hymn opens, may have been suggested to the author by an observation of the curious structure of the human body, and by the wonder which that observation had occasioned.”

It is more than probable that if Prof. Muir had deeply thought on the *chakras* and triangles of the hymn and also on the close analogy between the Atharva-Vedic and Tantric doctrines regarding symbolism and witchcraft, he would, instead of remarking ‘the poet had been led to imagine,’ have said that ‘the poet had been led to represent the object of his worship with visible symbols.’

CHAPTER II.

Athurvanic and Tantric Witchcraft.

While Bhaga is invoked in the *Atharva-Veda* for progeny and for the maintenance of harmony between husband and wife, and is thanked for providing wives, Kâma is given the functions of both the Creator and God of Love. In the philosophical hymn (IX. 2, A.-V.), Kâma, the creative desire, is one of the primeval forces; while in the hymn (III. 25, A.-V.) Kâma assumes the function of Cupid. The consideration of the symbolical practices of the ritual of the latter hymn, the performance of which is supposed to arouse the passionate love (*vasîkaraṇa*) of a woman, tends to prove that the Athurvanic Kâma is no other than symbolical Kâma of Tantric literature. The hymn is thus translated by Maurice Bloomfield : —

(1) “May Kâma, the disquieter, disquiet thee; do not hold out upon thy bed! With the terrible arrow of Kâma, do I pierce thee in the heart.”

(2) “The arrow of Kâma, winged with longing, barbed with love, whose shaft is undeviating desire, with that, well-aimed, Kâma shall pierce thee in the heart.”

(3) “With that well-aimed arrow of Kâma which parches the spleen, whose plume flies forward, which burns up, do I pierce thee in the heart.”

(4) “Consumed by burning ardour, with parched mouth, do thou (woman) come to me, plaint, (thy) pride laid aside, mine alone, speaking sweetly and to me devoted.”

(5) “I drive thee with a goad from thy mother and thy father, so that thou shalt be in my power, shalt come up to my wish.”

The most important symbolical practice, which is to accompany the recital of the hymn, is thus described in *Kaushikasûtra* :—

प्रतिकृतिमावलेखिनीं दाम्भ्यैषेण भंगज्येन
कण्टकशल्ययोलुकपत्रया सितालकण्डया हृदये विधायति.

35, 28, *Kaushikasûtra*.

‘By means of Dârbhyûsha-bow with a bow string made of hemp and an arrow whose barb is a thorn, whose plume is derived from an owl and whose shaft is made of black ala-wood, the lover pierces the heart of the pictorial representation (of a woman).’

While translating the above *sûtra*, M. Bloomfield interpreted the words “*âvalekchinim pratilēritim*” as “an effigy made of potter’s clay.” But there is nothing in the *sûtra* itself meaning potter’s clay. The word *lecha*, which is derived from the same root as *âvalekchinī*, is often used in the text itself in the sense of scratching.

सप्तमर्यादा इत्युत्तरतोऽग्नेस्सप्त लेखा लिखति प्राच्यः

76, 21, *Kausikasûtra*.

‘While asking the bride to recite the hymn *Saptamaryada* (seven limits, &c., during the Saptapadi ceremony in marriage), the priest draws on the north to the fire seven lines towards the east.’

Similarly, the word *parilekha* is also used in the sense of scratching or drawing.

वाचा बद्धाय भूमिपरिलेखम्.

52, 4, *Kausikasûtra*.

‘To release a man tied by curse, the earth is scratched.’

There is also another hymn (130, VI., A.-V.), in which a woman is depicted as performing for the purpose of arousing the passionate love (Tantric, *vaśīkaraṇa*) of a man, the same symbolical practice of piercing, with similar arrow and bow, the heart of the pictorial form of her lover.

It may be urged that the practice of pictorial writing may be true for the time of the *Kausikasûtra*, but that it cannot be admitted with equal certainty for the time of the *Atharva-Veda*. But the consideration of the gambling hymn (7, 50, A.-V.) will certainly dispel all doubts on this point:—

अजैषं त्वामं लिखितमजैषमुत संरुधम्
अविं वृको यथा मथदेवा मथनामि ते कृतम्

7, 50, 5, A.-V.

‘I have conquered thee who art scratched here. I have not only conquered, but also bound thee here. As a wolf destroys a sheep, so do I destroy thy charms.’

While commenting on the above verse, Sâyana says that gamblers usually mark certain symbols on a definite spot, and play on the same spot to ensure their victory.

Turning now to Tantric witchcraft, we see almost exactly the same practice. I take, for instance, two passages from the *Nityâśhodasikârṇava* and its commentary, the *Setubandha* by Bhâskarananda. The former work is in the form of a dialogue between Siya and his consort Pârvatī:—

लिखेद्रोचनयैकान्ते प्रतिमामवनीतले ।
स्वरूपां चात्र शृंगारवेषाभरण भूषिताम् ।
तत्फालगळहन्नाभिजन्ममण्डलयोजिताम्
जन्मनाममहाविद्यामंकुशान्तावदभिर्तिम्
सर्वगंसंधिसंलीनमालिख्य मवनाक्षरम्
.....

P. 112, Part I., *Nityâśhodasikârṇava*.

'The picture of a woman to be captivated, consisting of her face, throat, breast, navel and her generative organ, together with her peculiar ornaments and dress, shall be drawn with *rochana* (a bright yellow pigment prepared from the urine or bile of a cow) in a secluded place. The picture of *ankuśa* (a hook used to drive an elephant), combined with the symbol of sacred knowledge and the name of the beloved, is to be attached. The symbol of Madana (*Kāma* = a straight line between two dots) is to be written in all the joints of the pictorial form. (See Plate VI.)

The other passage runs as follows : —

लिखित्वा विपुलं चक्रं तन्मध्ये प्रतिमां यदि ।
नाम्ना लिखति संयुक्तां ज्वलन्ती चिन्तयेत्तत ।
शतयोजनमात्रस्था त्वद्दृश्यापि च या भवेत् ।
भयलज्जाविनिर्मुक्ता साप्यायाति विमोहिता ।

P. 108, *Nityāśhodaśikāṛṇava*.

'Having written in the centre of a large circle the picture of a woman, together with her name, one has to think of her as languishing with the effects of love. However great may be the distance, she will run to the lover, abandoning all her fear and shame.'

Then follows the commentary on this passage, which clearly manifests the force of conservative spirit with which time-honoured customs and doctrines, however crude and absurd, were regarded as inviolable. It was likely that, owing to the omission to mention the particular writing ingredient in the above passage, worshippers might use other than traditional materials. With a view to avoid so profane a practice, the commentator kindly took the trouble to supply the omission. He says : —

'The omission to mention the name of the particular writing ingredient in the above text is due to the consideration on the part of the author that the nature of the material can be easily understood by reference to the rules laid down in similar contexts in other authoritative Tantric texts. The *Dakṣiṇāmūrtisanhitā*, for example, lays down : —

'कृत्वा सिन्दूरजसा चक्रं तत्र विभावयेत् ।'

'Having drawn the circle with red lead, the worshipper shall contemplate on it.'

This kind of decision by reference to outside authority is quite in accordance with the theory of 'similar contexts' propounded by the *Mīmāṃsakas* (Vedic commentators) with regard to similar rituals.

This insistence on adhering to long-continued customs regarding writing materials is equally perceptible regarding the form of pictures. The enumeration made in the first passage of such important members as 'forehead,' 'neck,' 'heart,' 'navel' and 'generative organ' recalls the simple picture of *Kāmi-kala* in the *Tripuropanishad*, while it admits of no doubt that witchcraft, prehistoric in its origin, Athurvanic in its infancy, and Tantric in its youth, old age and decay, has undergone only such modifications as misinterpretations and misunderstandings of past traditions rendered possible. It must necessarily follow that the process of drawing, with cow's bile or blood, the rudimentary outlines of victims, essential to the satisfactory performance of sorcery, is far anterior to the art of painting and coeval with, and perhaps earlier than, the *Atharva-Veda*. Regarding sorcery itself, Prof. Macdonell observes as follows :¹⁹ —

'All India is pervaded by sorcery from the *R.-V.* (7, 104; 10, 84; 10, 128, 155) through the Yajush literature, and curiously enough also the *Upanishads* (Br. Ar. 6, 4, 12) through the

¹⁹ P. 66, *Atharva-Veda : Grundriss*.

systematic Vidhāna texts to the *Tāntras* of the worshippers of Sakti. Especially, the Yajush and Srauta texts frequently abandon for a moment their main theme in keen remembrance of him that 'hates us and whom we hate.' This is either done by imparting to one or another sacrificial act a similar turn by a conscious symbolic modification of the practice or in the so-called *kāmyeshtayah* many of which are directed against enemies. Thus the formulas of the ritual literature are quite frequently identical with or similar to the prose passages of the *Ābhichārika* hymns of the *Atharva-Veda* In judging the chronology of the Athurvan collection in its finished aspect, it is important to note that these formulas certainly existed in Vedic literature outside the Athurvanic schools, and prior to any Athurvan redaction. The practice of sorcery, if not its imprecations, goes back to Indo-European times (*Avesta*, *Yātu*). Pāṇini, 4, 4, 96, still describes as Rishau, i. e., as Vedic, the kind of *mantra* which he calls '*hṛīdyā*,' according to the scholiast, in the sense of '*hṛīdayasya bandhanah*,' captivating the heart, *Vaśīkaraṇa mantrah*. Especially forceful is 5, 31, A. V., containing a catalogue of homely, animate or inanimate objects, within which spells were instituted : — An unburnt vessel, grain, raw meat, the cock, goat and other animals, the *Gārhapatya* fire, house-fire, house, assembly hall, gaming place, the army, the drum, the arrow and the weapon, the well and the burial-place, &c."

As the phallic gods *Kāma* and *Bhaga* of the Tantric literature cannot, as pointed out above, be other than the *Kāma* and *Bhaga* of the *Atharva-Veda*, phallic worship must have necessarily existed in Vedic India, as its existence in mediæval and Modern India is fully warranted by Tantric literature on the one hand, and by the *Kāma* festival, celebrated even to this day, on the other. The *Kāma* festival is still observed by a few sects among the Brāhmins and by almost the whole of the non-Brahmanic community of the Hindus. A rod two feet long is tied crosswise to a pole five or six feet in height. One or two winnowers, almost triangular in shape, old and worn out, are attached to the cross-bar. This effigy is taken in procession through the streets, with the accompaniment of drums beating, with indecent songs sung in praise of *Bhagadevatā* and *Kāmadeva*, and with the dancing of harlots. In a definite place in a street, where a number of old and worn-out winnowers are previously heaped up for the purpose of burning the effigy, the pole with its cross-bar, as representing *Kāma* and *Bhaga*, is set on fire, while the multitude simultaneously begin to beat their mouths, sending forth loud outbursts of hideous sounds.

Also, the infallible evidence that is furnished by the comparative study of religions, not only tends to prove the existence of phallic worship in Vedic India, but also carries it as far back as Indo-European times. For while phallic worship was predominant both in ancient Greece and Rome, there is no reason to doubt that it formed part of *Āryan* stock of religions and also found its home in India. Regarding the phallic worship in ancient Greece, the following description is found in Chambers' *Encyclopædia* : —

"The phallus is a representation of the male generative organs used at certain Dionysian festivals in ancient Greece. It was an object of common worship throughout the nature religion of the East, and was called by manifold names, such as *Linga*, *Yoni*, &c. Originally, it had no other meaning than the allegorical one of that mysterious union between the male and the female, which throughout nature seems to be the sole condition of the continuation of the existence of animated beings; but at a later period, more particularly when ancient Rome had become the hot-bed of all natural and unnatural vices, its worship became an intolerable nuisance and was put down by the Senate on account of the more than unusual immorality to which it gave rise. Its origin has given rise to much speculation, but no certainty has been arrived at by investigators. The Phœnicians traced its introduction into their worship to Adonis, the Egyptians to Osiris, the Phrygians to Attis, the Greeks to Dionysus. The common myth concerning it was the story of some god, deprived of his powers of

generation — an allusion to the sun which in autumn loses its fructifying influence. The procession in which it was carried about was called Phallagogia, and a certain song that was sung on that occasion was called the Phallikon Melos. The bearers of the *phallus* which generally consisted of red leather and was attached to an enormous pole, were the *phallophori*. *Phalli* were on those occasions worn as ornaments round the neck, or attached to the body. Aristotle traces the origin of comedy to the ribaldry and the improvised jokes customary on those festivals. *Phalli* were often attached to statues, and of prodigious size; sometimes they were even movable. At a procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus, a *phallus* was carried about made of gold and 120 yards long. Before the temple of Venus at Hierapolis, there stood two *phalli*, 180 feet high, upon which a priest mounted annually and remained there in prayer for seven days. The *phallus* was an attribute of Pan, Priapus, and to a certain extent also of Hermes."

Besides the consideration of the identity or almost exact similarity between the practices of Tantric and Atharva-Vedic witchcraft under the presidency of the phallic gods, Kâma and Bhaga, there is also the consideration of epigraphic evidence, which is of much importance in determining the chronology of Tantric worship. It has already been described how lines, circles, triangles, and squares or rectangles are some of the figures that were required in assigning a pictorial form, not only to victims aimed at in sorcery, but also to the presiding deities Kâma and Bhaga. Similar figures, intended of course to represent some gods or goddesses, are found carved, not only on ancient Hindu coins, but also on pillars and walls of ancient temples. There can be no doubt that those coins which bear the symbols of Kâmi-kalâ, consisting of one circle to represent face, two circles breast-nipples, and a triangle the mysterious organs, are older than coins with regular epigraphic inscription. (See Plate III.) Regarding his own collection of the earliest Hindu coins, James Prinsep observes thus: —

"It²⁰ is an indisputable axiom that unstamped fragments of silver and gold of a fixed weight must have preceded the use of regular coin in those countries where civilization and commerce have induced the necessity of some convenient representatives of value. The antiquarian will have, therefore, little hesitation in ascribing the highest grade of antiquity in Indian numismatology to those small flattened bits of silver or other metal which were occasionally discovered all over the country, either quite smooth or bearing only punch-marks on one or both sides; and generally having a corner cut off, as may be conjunctured, for the adjustment of their weight. Their average weight is 50 grains or the same as the *tanka* or 3 *māshas* of the ancient Hindu metrology. Indeed, the word *tanka-sāla*, mint, goes to prove that these are the very pieces fabricated for circulation under that name." — (Footnote.)

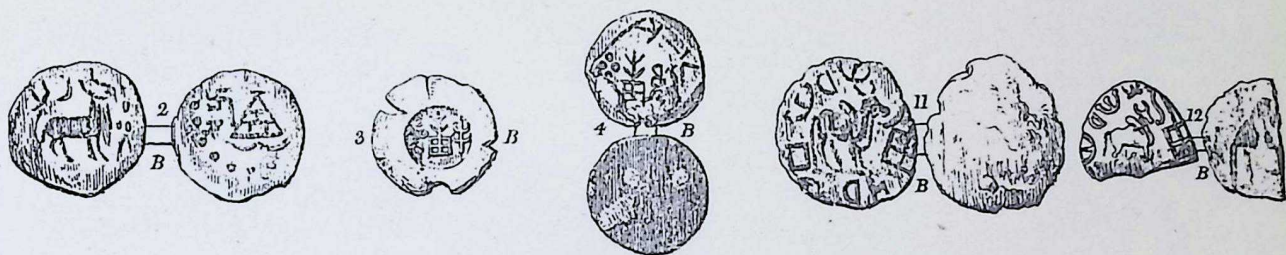
"Many instances of these have been given in Colonel Mackenzie's collection (figs. 101—108 of Wilson's plates), who describes them as 'of an irregular form, bearing no inscription, occasionally quite plain and in any case have only a few indistinct and unintelligible symbols: that of the sun or a star is most common, and those of the Lingam (?), the crescent, and figures of animals may be traced. The Colonel's specimens were chiefly procured. Others have been dug up in the Sandabans and many were found at Behat (fig. 14, J. A. S. B.). But the few selected specimens in Colonel Mackenzie's collection (figs. 24 and 29) yield more food for speculation than the merely smooth pieces above alluded. On all these we perceive the symbol of the sun to be the faintest of those present. In two instances (figs. 28 and 29) it is superposed by symbols which may be hence concluded to be more recent. These are severally the , Chaitya (?), the tree, the Svastika , and the human figure, besides which, in fig. 26, we have the elephant and the bull and the peculiar symbols of figs. 34—37. They are all stamped at random with punches, and may naturally be interpreted as the insignia of successive dynasties, authenticating their currency."

²⁰ J. A. S. B., Vol. IV., p. 628.

DEVANAGARI ALPHABET.

Plate III.

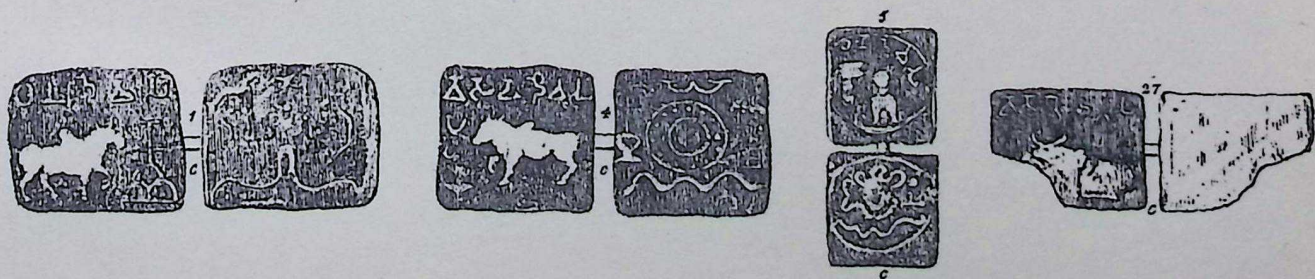
ANCIENT HINDU COINS IN THE JOURNAL, ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL.



1. Reproduced from Vol. III., Plate IX. p. 227.



2. Reproduced from Vol. IV., Plates XXXIV. and XXXV. p. 626.



3. Reproduced from Vol. VII., Plate LX. p. 1052.

"In one, fig. 30, does there appear any approach to alphabetic characters, and here the letters resemble those of the *ldts*, or of the caves on Western India, the most ancient written form of the Sanskrit language. From the above originals seem to have descended two distinct families, of which one was produced by the hammer and die, the other by casting in a mould. Of the latter, easily recognisable by the depth of the relief, the projecting keel on the margin, showing where the moulds were united — and the greater corrosion due to the softness of the cast metal, — we have various groups and subdivisions, but most of them agree in bearing the  monogram for the obverse, sometimes as in figs 34—37, with addition of two smaller symbols, , like the sign of Taurus reversed."

"On the reverse we have frequently a dog with a collar (and bell?), guarding a sword or a flagstaff of victory (Jayadhvaja, figs. 20, 21, 34, 36). At other times an elephant (fig. 39), a bull (37), or the sacred tree (15, 18), and, in rarer cases, the device on both sides is changed as in figs. 40, 41. Figs. 18, 42, 43 (in the latter of which the elephant might easily be mistaken for a Devanāgarī letter) are of the cast species."

"How far the antiquity of the first Buddhistic groups of coins may have approached the epoch of Buddha (544 B. C.), it is difficult to determine, but the acquisition of their similitude to the Indu-Scythic coins must have been posterior to the breaking up of the genuine Bactrian Dynasty, perhaps about the commencement of the Christian era."

As it is unnecessary to reproduce here the figures of all the coins referred to in the quotation, only such figures as can throw some light on the nature and form of Indian hieroglyphics are reproduced in Plate III. It can be seen from the figures how a circle followed by two circles and a triangle beneath are, as described in the verse of the *Tripuropanishad* quoted above, stamped on Hindu coins, the antiquity of which admits of no doubt whatever. What in the above quotation is imagined to be a dog with a collar, is no other than the figure of Sakti, made up of a circle and two circles, crowned with the figure of half moon. Only the circles are not drawn apart and are not exactly circular. This clumsiness is clearly due to the rude process of sketching or stamping the hieroglyphics on pieces of metal. Similarly, the symbol , mistaken for Chaitya, is clearly the figure of Kāmī-kalā without the triangle, but with an additional symbol of a half moon to form a crown for the goddess. Whether the figures of Kāmī-kalā or of Siva (figs. 2, 3, 4, group 1; figs. 19, 33, group 2; and fig. 1, group 3 — Plate III.) were superposed after the symbols of similar or different description became worn out, it is quite impossible to determine. Anyhow, there is no reason to doubt that those coins which contain only symbols are far anterior to those that contain regular inscriptions. For it is not only unlikely, but also unnatural, that coins with mere symbols should have been struck when writing had become current.

As regards the relation between these symbols and a few of the Devanāgarī characters, it is not merely either an accidental approach in resemblance or an imaginary one, as in the case of Prof. Bühler's Semitic models and the Brāhmī Characters, but such a perfect likeness as must necessarily and unmistakably exist between a parent and its offspring. The symbol in fig. 43, which, in the above quotation, was not only mistaken for an elephant, but also apprehended as likely to be mistaken for a Devanāgarī letter, appears to have been intended, together with the other symbols, to mean the name 'Ayodhya.'  = A,  = y,  or  = dh, Y = y. The last symbol  = dh, with another symbol  as in fig. 5, seems to have been intended to convey the idea 'dhana,' 'wealth.' Similarly, the symbols in figs. 17 and 18 seem to have been intended to mean 'Ayodhye' and 'Ayodhyam,' the Svastika figures , , like the double rectangle of fig. 43, standing for A. It is immaterial whether the ancient mint authorities had or had not such an idea while stamping their coins with these symbols, and there is

nothing strange in finding in these symbols letters corresponding to the above words, inasmuch as these symbols have been, as we shall see, taken for those letters.

The coins containing the inscription 'negama' are, according to Sir A. Cunningham, anterior to the conquest of India by Alexander the Great, inasmuch as they are found to contain the very archaic forms of letters. Besides, the absence of medial vowels in the inscription of Ayodhya coins (figs. 11 and 12), and the insertion of initial vowels in the place of medial vowels in the inscriptions of Vassudeva coins (figs. 4, 27, group 3, Plate III.) are incontrovertible proofs regarding the priority of these coins to the time of Aśoka, when medial vowels are found to have long been completely elaborated. Hence it must be admitted that coins with smooth surfaces or with hieroglyphics are far earlier than the 6th or 7th centuries B. C. Can it be doubted then that the description of the hieroglyphics in such Tantric texts as the *Tripuropanishad*, &c., is the reproduction of Tantric tradition of bygone ages?

Besides ancient coins, the walls of ancient temples, as well as stones lying in the vicinity of a few temples in India, are also found to have hieroglyphic symbols chiselled on them. Out of the carved and plain blocks of granite and sandstone found in the bed of a river in the vicinity of Suddyah, Upper Assam, a triangular weather-worn block of granite is said to contain certain symbols engraved upon it. Regarding these symbols Major F. S. Hanny observes thus :—

"They may, perhaps, have some meaning and give a clue to the era of the building, — one or two of the letter-like figures assimilate with some of the characters of the ancient Devanāgarī Alphabet; but the shaded figures are too deeply cut to suppose they are more than symbolical of a particular era and people."

An examination of these symbols (as shown in Plate IV.) will, I am sure, establish the argument I have been putting forward. They are no more than hieroglyphics intended to represent the several Tatvas of the Universe, corresponding to the several members of the human frame, and thereby form an outline of the picture of a god or goddess.

The symbols, marked by me with numbers, may be arranged in the following order :—

1. Head-dress.	16 & 17. Eyes.
2. Head.	18 & 19 (19 worn away). Ears.
3. Nose.	20 & 21. Hands.
4 & 5. Lips.	22 & 23. Trunk. (Vāmapârśva left side and Dakṣiṇapârśva right side.)
6 & 7. Arms.	As the lungs are believed to be
8 & 9. Cheeks.	Viśuddhichakra, seat of purification,
10 & 11. Legs.	the upper portions of the
12 & 13. Forehead when placed in parallel lines.	figures representing them seem
14 & 15. Thighs.	to have been unshaded.

Also those symbols which are carved in the foundation of the enclosure wall of the temple, and also on the elephant near the same river, and which Major F. S. Hanny thought to be typical of the mason or of the builders, are evidently the pictures of the "weapons" of the god. The symbols marked with Roman numbers in Plate IV. are, (I.) a *chakra*, (II.) an arrow, (III.) a bow with an arrow, (IV.) another form of a bow with an arrow, (V.) a *lotus* bud, (VI. and VII.) some weapons, and (VIII.) a shield or a square.

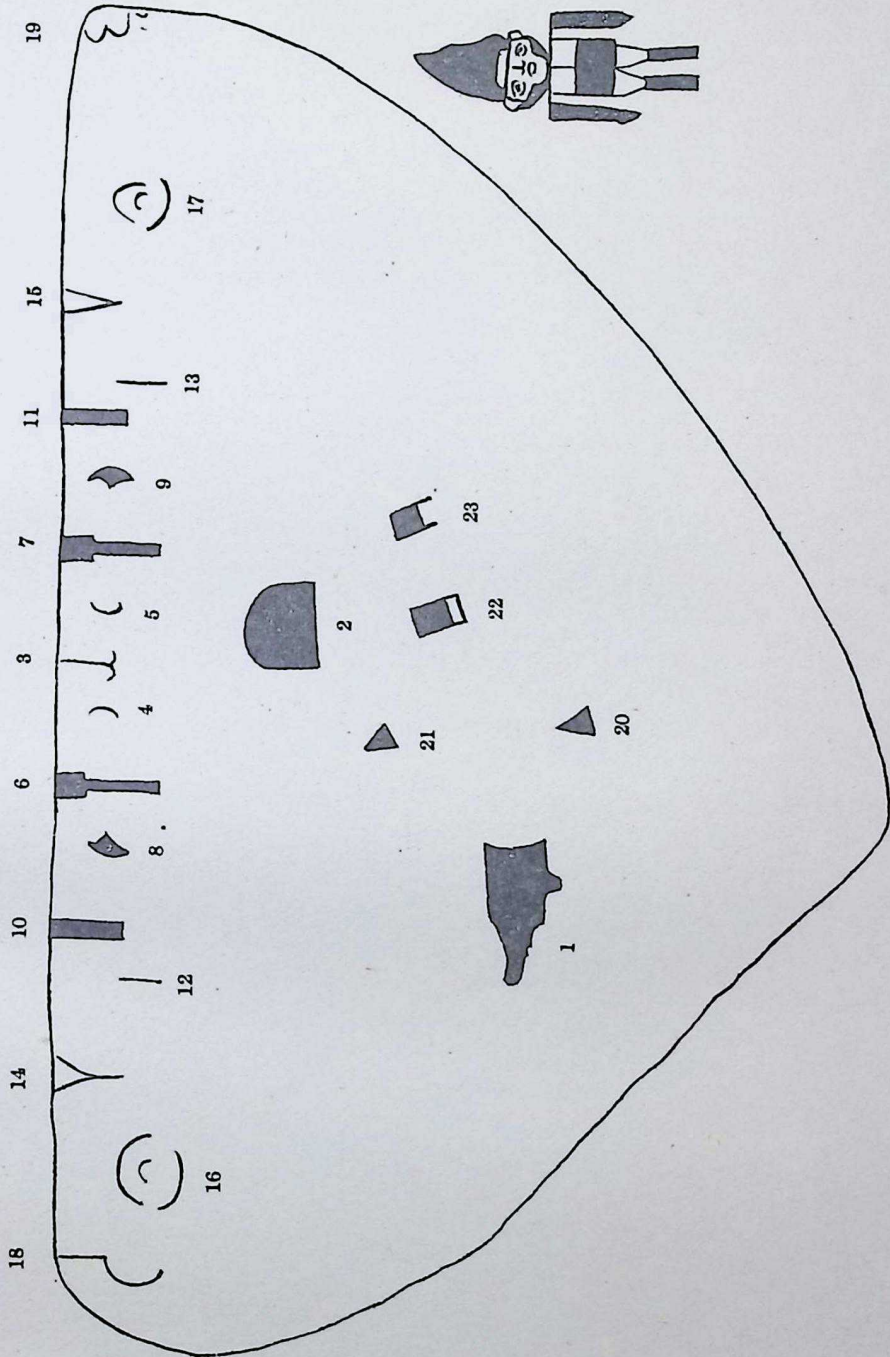
Regarding the antiquity of the temple ruins in Assam, Captain E. Tuite Dalton observes thus:²¹—

"The *Yogini Tantra*, a work of high repute in Assam, as its contents are supposed to have been communicated by Śiva to his consort Pârvatī, states, regarding the king Naraka, that, though

²¹ A. R., Vol. XXIV.

DEVANAGARI ALPHABET.

Plate IV.



- I.
- II.
- III.
- IV.
- V.
- VI.
- VII.
- VIII.

an 'Asur,' infidel, he was in such favour with the gods that they made him the guardian of the temple of Kāmikhya. It is not improbable that the temple was originally erected by Naraka; but of this we have no certain evidence. The assertion made in the *Tantra*, however, would at least lead us to suppose that the temple was in existence in his days. (Robinson's MS.).

"The socket of the *yoni* is cut so as to accord with the square and octagonal portion of the inserted part of the *linga*. The removal of a heap of stones in front of this edifice disclosed the foundation of another shrine that appears to have been surmounted by a circular or octagonal temple. This covered a crypt some 3½ feet below the surface, neatly faced with cut stone, and having at the bottom, bedded in a circular slab or *yoni*, a Mahādeva, in the form of a *Linga*."

To sum up : — The chief doctrines of Tantric system are much older than they have hitherto been supposed, and are, in fact, Athurvanic in character — (1) because the Tantric Kāma and Bhaga, known also by the names Siva and Sakti, are no other than the phallic god and goddess Kāma and Bhaga of the *Atharva-Veda*: (2) because the Tantric and Athurvanic practices of witchcraft are almost identical: (3) because the symbols which, as representing gods or goddesses, are dealt with in Tantric literature must precede the manufacture of idols in human likeness: and (4) because the same symbols as those treated in Tantric literature are stamped on Hindu coins of undoubted antiquity. From this it must necessarily follow that, although the Tantric works which furnish ample material to prove the growth of the Devanāgarī Alphabet out of indigenous hieroglyphics may be recent, and in some cases quite modern, yet those Tantric passages which treat of symbolical worship and of the meaning and purpose of symbols must be either exact quotations from older works, which they replaced, or modern compositions containing ancient traditions.

CHAPTER III.

The Tantric Hieroglyphics.

Having thus far investigated the reasons for admitting the antiquity of the Indian hieroglyphics, which, as we shall see, have given rise to the Devanāgarī Alphabet, let us now turn our attention to the consideration of the hieroglyphics treated of at length in Tantric literature:—

मध्ये कालं बिन्दुर्द्विप इवाभाति वर्तुलाकारः ।
तदुपरि ततोऽर्धचन्द्रोऽन्वर्थः कान्त्या तथाकृत्या ॥
अथ रोहिणी तदूर्ध्वं त्रिकोणरूपा च चन्द्रिकाकान्तिः ।
नादस्तु पञ्चराग इवाण्डद्वयमध्यवर्तिनी सीरा ॥
नादान्तस्सद्यस्थिता बिन्दुयुक्ता लाङ्गलवत् ।
तिर्यग्बिन्दुद्वितये वामोद्गच्छत्सिराकृतिश्चक्षुः ॥
बिन्दुद्गच्छन्त्र्यभाकाराथ व्यापिका प्रोक्ता ।
ऊर्ध्वाधो बिन्दुद्वितययुतरेखाकृतिस्समनाः ।
सैवोर्ध्वबिन्दु हीनोन्मनास्तदूर्ध्वं महाबिन्दुः ॥

P. 17, *Varivasyārahasya*.

'In the middle of the forehead does a circular dot shine as the flame of a lamp. Above it is the semi-circle which resembles the half moon, both in form and colour. Then comes above it the figure of Rôdhini, the obstructor, which has the form of a triangle, and is as brilliant as the moonlight. But the figure of Nāda, sound, is like a ploughshare, as brilliant as a ruby, between

two egg-shaped figures. The figure of Nâdânta, the end of sound, is in the form of a ploughshare, touching a circular dot drawn to its right. The figure of Sakti is like a ploughshare, connected with the left one of two circular dots placed in parallel. The figure of Vyâpika, the pervader, is a triangle starting from a circular dot. A perpendicular straight line terminated both above and below in a circle is what is called Samanâh, with the mind. The same figure without the upper circle is called Unmanâh, the mind going up. Above all these figures is the great circle.' (See Plate V.²²)

Similarly, in the *Siddhânta-sârdvali*, an Âgama manuscript, attributed to Aghoraśivâchârya, more or less the same symbols with two more, are thus described :—

घोषो मेधा क्षमाख्यो विषमथ च ततश्चेतना चन्द्रखण्डः
त्र्यश्रं वृष्टत्तसीरोऽरुणकिरणहलस्तेन्दुसीरक्रमेण ।
वृत्तार्कलिशिखं द्विविम्बकलिता रेखा द्विकुब्जोन्मनाः
साकारं मनसा स्मरेदपि कलाः प्रत्येकमर्च्यादिशवे ॥

“घोषः शिवबीजो हकारः मेधा अकारः क्षमा लकारः विष मकारः ततः चेतना बिन्दुः चन्द्रखण्डार्धचन्द्रः त्र्यश्रं त्रिकोणं निरोधि. वृष्टत्तसीरः वृष्टत्ताभ्यां युक्तसीरः अनेन नाद उच्यते. अरुणकिरणहलः अरुणकिरण आदित्यः दक्षिणपार्श्वबिन्दुः तद्युक्तो हलः अनेन नादान्तस्थ ग्रहणम्. सेन्दुसीरः वामपार्श्वबिन्दुयुक्तसीरः अनेन शक्तिकलायाः प्रस्तारो दर्शितः वृत्तार्कलिशिखं दक्षिणबिन्दुयुक्तत्रिदण्डः त्रिशूलं वा अथ द्विविन्दुकलिता द्विकुब्जा रेखा दक्षिणवामबिन्दुद्वययुक्ता द्विवक्त्रा रेखा समनाः कलाः बिन्दुविलसदृजुरेखाकृतिरुन्मनाः कला.”

P. 80, *Siddhânta-sârdvali*.

“Ghosha, sound, is the symbol of god Siva, i. e., the letter *ha*. Medha, intelligence, is the letter, *a*. Kshama, the earth, is the letter, *la*. The vital power is the dot. What is called part of the moon is the half moon. Nirodhi, the obstructor, is a triangle. A ploughshare between two eye-ball-like figures is called Nâda. The figure of a ploughshare, connected with a dot on the right side, is called Nâdânta. A similar figure, but connected with a dot on the left side, is Sakti. A trident connected with a circular dot is, what is called, Trîśikha, tree-headed. The figure of a double semi-circular curve, with two circular dots, one on the right and the other on the left side, is called Samanâh. A straight line passing up from a circle is Unmanâh. Each of these figures is not only to be contemplated upon, but also worshipped.’ (See Plate VI.²³)

Thus the *Siddhânta-sârdvali* evidently identifies some alphabetic letters with particular hieroglyphics, while such emblems as the half moon, triangle, Nâda, Nâdânta, &c., appear to be merely crude representations of parts of the human frame drawn so as to represent the god Siva. The four alphabetic letters, too, enumerated in the beginning of the stanza must necessarily mean such hieroglyphics as with the rest can give to the picture of the god an approximate human appearance. (See Plate VI.) We have already seen how a rectangular figure has been taken to represent the earth. Hence, by the word *kshama*, ‘the earth,’ in the stanza, a rectangular figure representing the lower part of the picture is evidently meant. As the throat of the god Siva is believed to contain poison, the word *risha*, poison, seems to refer either to the picture of the throat or to that of a cobra, with which the waist of Siva is believed to be entwined. Likewise, the letter A (called by the names, *medha*, intelligence; *amṛita*, nectar; *amṛita-kalāśa*, vessel full of nectar) may refer either to the middle of the brows, which is the seat of intelligence according to Hindu

²² [The printing of the plates in England has caused errors to creep into the letterpress, most of which will be apparent to the reader, as they are chiefly in the diaritical marks used in representing vernacular words: *o-ŋ*, *biṇḍu* in this plate. — Ed.]

²³ [In Plate VI. for ‘hook (*srīṇi*)’ read ‘hook (*srīṇi*).’ — Ed.]

DEVANAGARI ALPHABET.

Plate V.



Mahabindu, the great circle.



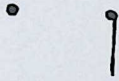
Unmanah, the mind going upwards.



Samanah, with the mind.



Vyâpika, the pervader.



Śakti, strength.



Nâdânta, the end of sound.



Nâda, sound.



Rôdhinî, the obstructor.



Ardhachandra, half moon.

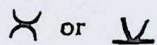
Bindu, dot.

DEVANAGARI ALPHABET.

Plate VI.



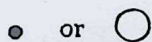
Ghosha = H.

Medha = A.
(Vessel of nectar, or the middle of the brows),

Kshama, earth = L.



Visha ; poison, serpent = M.



Bīṇḍu ; vital power.



Half moon.



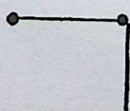
triangle.



Nāda, Śiva, Kāma.



Nādānta.



Śakti.



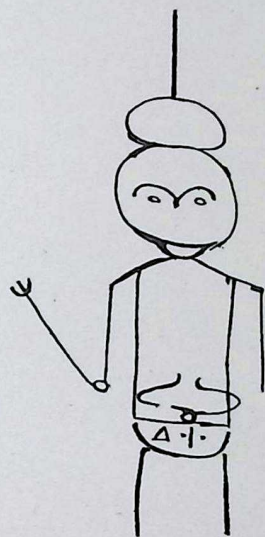
Tridanda, trident.



Samanah, with the mind.



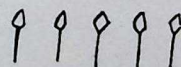
Unmānah, the mind going upwards.



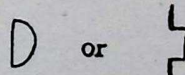
Śiva.



Kāmi-kala or Śakti.

hook (*śrīm*).

the five arrows.



bow.



pāśa, noose.



philosophy, or to the brain which is called *sudhāsindhu*, the ocean of nectar, or to a vessel of nectar, which Siva is believed to hold in his hands. Similarly, the letter *ha* seems to represent the trunk of the body of Siva. For the *Vātulāgama*, another Tantric manuscript, says (p. 57) thus:—

शिवमेकं विजानीयान्मन्त्रमूर्तिं परं शिवम् ।

नादं किरीटमित्युक्तं बिन्दुर्वक्रमुदाहृतम् ।

हकारं देहमित्युक्तं द्वयौ तुङ्गौ भुजौ तथा ।

वह्निपादद्वयं विद्यात् मन्त्रमूर्तिरुदाहृता ॥

‘One has to know that the transcendental god Siva alone is identical with the form of the *mantra* (*hrīm*), which is attributed to him. *Nāda*, the nasal sound of the *mantra* (i. e., the symbol of *Nādānta*), is his crown. The letter *h* is the trunk of his body. (The symbols of) fire forms both the two great arms and the two legs. Thus the letters of the *mantra* form the picture of god Siva.’ (See Plate IX.)

In order to conform with the four letters of the *mantra* (*hrīm*), the *Vātulāgama* employs only four distinct symbols to represent not only the four letters themselves, but also a simple outline of the form of god Siva : but the *Varivasyādrahasya* huddles together some twelve symbols as constituting both the *mantra* (*hrīm*) and the form of the goddess Sakti :—

ह्रस्वेखायास्स्वरूपं तु व्योमाग्निर्वोमलोचनम्

बिन्दुर्धचन्द्रोधिन्वो नादनादान्तशक्तयः ।

व्यापिकासमनोन्मन्य इति द्वादशसंहतिः ।

बिन्दुद्वादीनां नवानां तु समष्टिर्नाद उच्यते ॥—

P. 10, *Varivasyādrahasya*.

‘The sky, fire, the left eye, a dot, the half moon, a triangle, (the symbols of) *Nāda*, *Nādānta*, *Sakti*, *Vyāpika*, *Samanā* and *Unmanī*, these twelve constitute the form of *Hrillekha*, the drawing of the heart. The nine symbols from *Bindu* to *Unmanī* are collectively called by the name *Nāda*.’ (See Plate V.)

The symbols or letters referred to in the above verse are clearly *h* (the sky), *r* (fire), and *i* (the left eye), inasmuch as they are the actual letters of the *mantra* (*hrīm*). While, according to both the *Vātulāgama* and the *Varivasyādrahasya*, the *mantra* takes the form of *hrīm*, it is, according to the *Siddhānta-sārdhvali*, pronounced as *hlam*. Regarding the forms of the letters of the *mantra*, we are told in the commentary of the *Vātulāgama* to confine our attention to the Devanāgarī Alphabet :—

शिवमन्त्रान्मूर्त्युद्धारकृतिः नागरलिपिभिरुद्धारयितुं युज्यते. व्यतिरिक्तलिपिभिर्नोद्धारयितुं युज्यते. —

P. 57, *Vātulāgama*.

‘The formation of the picture of god Siva by the letters of the *mantra* attributed to him can only be done in the characters of the Devanāgarī Alphabet. In no other alphabets is it possible to form the same.’

Had the commentator, however, been strict enough in his expressions, he would have, like Bhāskarananda, as we shall see, said that the formation of the picture could only be accomplished in the traditional forms of the Devanāgarī. The traditional forms of the letters are almost exactly identical with the forms of those of the *Asoka* Alphabet. Following the light thus thrown on the forms of the hieroglyphics enumerated in the *Siddhānta-sārdhvali*, they can be drawn as in Plates V. and VI.

It is needless to say that all these figures will, if properly conjoined, as in the case of the symbols of the Suddyah stone, yield an almost human appearance to the picture of god Siva. It is to be noted here how the triangular symbol is placed side by side with the Phallic symbol. This juxtaposition of these two symbols seems to be due to the doctrine that the combination of Purusha and Prakriti, male and female principles of creation, can alone bring about the Universe. But there is also a practice of drawing (see Plate VI.) a purely female figure of goddess Sakti as described in the stanza of the *Tripuropanishad* quoted above. This figure of Sakti or Kâmi-kalâ is not so complicated as that of Siva : Plate VI. While commenting on this verse of the *Upanishad*, Bhâskarananda writes thus, upholding the simplicity of the Kâmi-kalâ :

P. 34, *Varivasyârahasya*.

‘In the body, too, there are actually only three members. One is from the head down to the throat, the second from the throat as far as the breast-nipples, and the third from the breast down to the organ of procreation. The limbs, such as the hair, the arms and the legs, are only the branches of the three principal members.’

Further on he says that with a view to have a complete picture of the goddess Sakti, the thirteenth verse of the *Tripuropanishad* describes her weapons. The verse runs as follows :—

सृण्वेव सितया विद्वच्चर्षिणीः
पाशेन प्रतिबध्नात्यभीकान् ।
इष्टभिः पञ्चभिर्धनुषा च
विध्यत्यादिशक्तिररुणा विद्वज्जन्या

‘The mother of the Universe, who is its primæval cause and is as red as the early morning, protects the Universe with a white hook, and not only binds the wicked with her noose, but also kills them with her bow and five arrows.’ (See Plate VI.)

In justification of the propriety of using a hook for the purpose of protecting the Universe, the commentator quotes the following passage from Yâska’s *Nirukta* :—

द्विधा सृणिर्भवति भर्ता च हन्ता च.

‘The hook is of two kinds : one is protector and the other destroyer.’

The goddess Sakti is believed to assume three different forms (see Plate VII.) according as her functions of creation, protection or destruction change. A verse quoted from the *Partyaabhiññatantra* in the *Kâmakalâ-chidvallî* (p. 69) runs as follows :—

ऋजुरेखामयी विद्वत्स्थितौ प्रथितविग्रहा ॥
तत्संहतिदशायां तु बन्देवं रूपमाश्रिता ॥
प्रत्यावृत्तिक्रमेणैवं गृह्णादवपुरुज्ज्वला ।

‘The goddess of renowned form assumes, in time of protection, the form of a straight line. In time of destruction, she takes the form of a circle. Similarly, for creation she takes the brilliant appearance of a triangle (Sriṅgâta).’ (See Plate VII.)

The egg of the Universe, formed by the union of Siva and Sakti, is thus described in the *Varivasyârahasya* :—

विद्वत्सिसृक्षावशतस्वार्धौ शक्तिं व्यलोकयद्ब्रह्मा ।
बिन्दुर्भवति तमिन्दुं प्रविशति शक्तिस्तु रक्तबिन्दुतया ॥
एतद्विन्दुद्वितयं विसर्गसंज्ञं हकारचैतन्यम् ।

P. 51, *V. R.*

DEVANAGARI ALPHABET

Plate VII.

Śakti while protecting the universe.



Śakti during the destruction of the universe.



Śakti while creating the world.

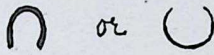
THE SYMBOLS OF THE FIVE ELEMENTS, MODELLED ON THE
FIVE DIVISIONS OF THE HUMAN FRAME.



Visarga.



the sky.



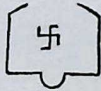
The sky, from the middle of the brows to the *brahmarandhra* or the hole on the top of the head.



The air, from the neck to the middle of the brows.



the air.



The fire, from the navel to the neck.



the fire.



The waters, from the knee-joints to the waist ; with two lotus buds.



the waters.



The earth, from the legs to the knee-joints.



the earth with 8 symbols of Vajru,
weapon of Indra.

‘With the desire of creating the Universe, the Creator, Brahmâ, turns his attention to Sakti, who forms half of his body. A drop in the form of the moon results. Sakti, in the form of a red drop, enters into the white drop. The combination of these two drops constitutes what is called *visarga*, emission, and is also the soul of the aspirate *h*.’ (See Plate VII.)

While commenting on this verse, the author says that the word *visarga* is, in the above sense, synonymous with the exclusively Vedic word *agnishomîya*, combination of fire and moon, and quotes from the *Taittirîya Brâhmaṇa* (A. 2, P. 1) a passage the meaning of which is as follows :— ‘The fire enters into the rising sun. Or the sun enters into the fire at sunset. On the new-moon day the sun and the moon combine together.’

The commentator concludes by saying that the sun is the mixture of red and white drops, as he has been entered into both by the fire and the moon. Susruta, the author of a celebrated Sanskrit medical work of the same name, seems to have taken the same view on the procreation of the Universe. He writes in the third chapter of his work thus :— ‘The male-seed is lunar and female-seed is fiery. This combination of the fire and the moon is the cause of embryo which finds itself in the womb.’

The bursting of the mixed drop is metaphorically described as the cause of the hieroglyphics which represent the so-called five elements :—

स्फुटितादरुणादिन्द्रोर्नावब्रह्माङ्कुरो व्यक्तः ।
तस्माद्गगनसमीरणदहनोदकभूमिवर्णसम्भूतिः ॥
एतत्पञ्चकविकृतिः जगदिदमण्डप्रजाण्डपर्यन्तम् ।

P. 10, *Varivasyârahasya*.

‘The bursting of the red drop occasions the eternal sound to spring up. That is the cause of the letters or figures which represent the five elements — the sky, the air, the fire, the water, and the earth. The modification of these five elements or of their representative figures constitutes the whole Universe, macrocosm and microcosm.’

This idea of a red drop causing the Universe is evidently the generalisation of what, as a special case, is found expressed in the *Atharva-Veda* :—

यत्समुद्रे अभ्यक्रन्दत्
पर्जन्यो विद्युता सह ।
ततो हिरण्ययो बिन्दुः
ततो दर्भो अजायत ॥

19, 30, 5, A. V.

‘From the thundering sound which the clouds in union with the lightning made in the ocean, came out the golden drop. From that drop came out the Darbha-grass.’

The hieroglyphics which are designed to represent the five elements have already been dealt with: Plate VII.

It is thus clear that there are three different sets of hieroglyphics designed for worship. First, such simple figures as a straight line, a circle, or a triangle appear to have been severally worshipped by beginners. Next comes the figure of Kâmi-kalâ, which, as consisting of a number of simple figures, appears to have been an object of worship after a little experience. As the formation of the figure of the hermaphrodite god Siva or Kâma requires a considerable knowledge of the

constituents of both the Universe and the human frame, it must necessarily have been an object of worship among the advanced class of devotees. In defence of the manipulation of these figures for worship, the commentator on the *Vāṭulāgama* quotes (p. 13) the following verse from *Paushkaratantra*:—

साधकस्य च लक्ष्यार्थं तस्य रूपानिदं स्मृतम् ।

‘With a view to provide the initiated with a tangible object for worship, this form has been designed and ascribed to the god.’

And:—

आकारवांश्चेन्नियमावृणोत्यस्यः

न वस्त्वनाकारमुपैतिबुद्धिः ।

‘A god, with a tangible form, can, in strict accordance with precepts, be worshipped ; for the mind cannot grasp anything that has no form.’

CHAPTER IV.

The Tantric Hieroglyphics and the Devanāgarī Alphabet.

Plate VIII.²⁴

It is more than probable that the practice of writing the hieroglyphics or ideograms for worship and reading in them the names of such gods and goddesses as Kāma, Siva, Sakti, Indrāni, &c., might have suggested to a clever worshipper the idea of the possibility of their symbols representing the initial syllables of their respective names. Also the use of monosyllabic *ka* in the sense of Kāma or Brahmā, as early as the time of the *Rig-Veda* and the *Atharva-Veda*, might have plainly suggested the idea of the symbol of Kāma representing *ka*.

कस्मै देवाय । कस्मै काय प्रजापतये देवाय ।

प्रजापतिर्वा कः तस्मै हविषा विधेम.

7, 4, 1, 19, *Satapathabrahmana*.

‘To which god? To whom is for *kaya*, the dative of *ka*, the god of Prājapati? *Ka* is Prājapati. To him let us offer our oblations.’

That such is the nature of the hint that occasioned the idea of finding alphabetic letters in the hieroglyphics is clearly alluded to in the *Tripurāṭṭipinī Upanishad*:—

निरञ्जनोऽकामत्वेनोज्ज्वलते. अ क च ट त प यश-

न्मृजते. तस्मादीश्वरः कामोऽभिधीयते तत्परिभाषया.

कामः ककारं व्याप्नोति. काम एवेदं तच्छिन्ति ककारो गृह्यते.

‘Though he has the power of growing spotless and is actuated with no desire whatever, he feels desirous, creates a, ka, cha, ṭa, ta, pa, ya, and sa, and is therefore called by the name Kāma and also by the technical name ‘*Tat*,’ ‘*That*.’ But Kāma contains within it the letter *ka*. As this (the hieroglyphic before the eyes) is verily Kāma and *Tat*, it is chosen as the letter *ka*.’

It has already been seen how a straight line between two dots is called by the names Kāma, Siva, &c. It is likely that, with a view to represent single sounds by single symbols, this compound symbol consisting of three figures was converted into a single cross-like symbol by joining the two dots. The ancient Devanāgarī *ka* has the form (see Plate VIII.) of a cross in the edicts of Aśoka.

²⁴ [In Plate VIII., facing p. 290, letter 1, last column, for ‘Padan’ read ‘Padan,’ and in the last line, first column, for ‘Ci’ read ‘N’. — Ed.]

Ekādaśādhāra, eleventh support, is one among the many names of the Devanāgarī letter ē. In the edicts of Aśoka it has a perfect triangular form. In his *Setubandha*, a commentary on the *Nītyāśhodasīkārṇava*, Bhāskarananda says : —

कोणत्रयवद्भुजवो लेखो यस्य तत् नागरलिप्या साम्प्रदायिकैरेकारस्य त्रिकोणाकारतयैव लेखनात्.

P. 14, *Setubandha*.

‘It is called Koṇatrayodbhava, born from a triangle, because it is written like a triangle. For the letter ē of the Nāgarī alphabet is always written like a triangle by strict adherents to tradition.’

The emphasis laid on the word *sāmpradāyikāḥ*, “by strict adherents to tradition,” is to be noted here; for it is customary among others to write the letter *e* like a triangle with a tail. Regarding this letter, the *Tripurātāpinī Upanishad* says thus : —

सविता प्राणिनस्सूते. प्रसूते शक्तिः सूते त्रिपुरा. शक्तिराद्येयं त्रिपुरा परमेस्वरी महाकुण्डलिनी देवी जातवेदसम-
ण्डलं योऽधीति सर्वं व्याप्यते. त्रिकोणशक्तिरेकारेण महाभागेन प्रसूते. तस्मादेकार एव गृह्यते. वरेण्यं श्रेष्ठं भजनीयमक्षरं
नमस्कार्यम्. तस्माद्वरेण्यमेकाक्षरं गृह्यते.²⁵

‘The sun brings forth living beings. Sakti does the same. Tripurā (triangle) brings forth species. Sakti is the eternal Tripurā, the great goddess, possessing of a great circle. Who knows the circle of fire? (the circle drawn on earth, within which fire is worshipped). The triangular ‘Sakti pervades all things and brings forth species through the magnificent letter. Hence, that letter ē alone is taken as the best, most respectable and worshipful symbol. Hence, that one adorable letter is selected.’²⁶

Hence, it may be believed that this triangular symbol representing Sakti, Bhaga, Ekādaśādhāra or Ekapādinī was taken to be the symbol for the initial syllable of the last word.

The Devanāgarī letter i is called by the names Kāma-kalā, Manmathakalā (wife of Kāma), Hārdakalā, part belonging to the breast, and Bindutrāya, three dots. It is only in the edicts of Aśoka, which were and are still Greek to all modern Tantric scholars, that this letter has the form of three dots placed at the three angular corners of a triangle. (See Plate VIII.) Regarding this letter, the *Kādimata* says : —

तच्चुरीयस्वरूपं तु बिन्दुत्रयमितीरितम्
तदात्मत्वं तु देव्यास्ते साधकेन च यद्भवेत्
तद्भावनां श्रुणु प्राप्ते महोदयकरीं शुभाम्
ऊर्ध्वबिन्द्वात्मकं वक्त्रमधोबिन्दुद्वयात्मकम्
कुचद्वयं च तच्छ्रेयैश्शेषाङ्गानि च भावयेत्²⁷

Patala 4, *Kādimata*.

‘It is said that the form of the fourth vowel is three dots. O, wise goddess, listen, how thy form is, in the view of thy devotee, identical with the form of that vowel and how the contemplation of that form is not only auspicious but also productive of immense property. The upper dot represents

²⁵ Compare similar verses, p. 2, *Kādimata*.

²⁶ The *Tripurātāpinī Upanishad* is clearly an attempt not only to represent the Gāyatrī mantra with a hieroglyphic symbol, but also to make it of the same purport as the Tantric panchadaśī, fifteen-lettered mantra referred to above.

²⁷ Compare stanza 19, *Saundaryalahari*; p. 45, *Bhashya* on *Lalitāsahasranāma*; and p. 73, *Kāma-kalā Chidvalli*; also p. 59, *Dakṣiṇā mūrtisamhita*.

the face, the lower two are the two breast-nipples. The rest of the limbs are to be meditated upon as the branches of these members.'

Even in the *Srichakra* of the Sringeri Matt,²⁸ in which all the letters of the Devanāgarī Alphabet, together with the Panchadaśī, fifteen-lettered *mantra*, are written, and which, as belonging to the oldest religious institution now in existence, may be considered as the oldest possible or the exact copy of its ancient pattern, if renewed often, the letter *i* is not in the form of three dots, but is in the type of the modern Devanāgarī. Yet, why this letter should be called *Kāma-kalā*, and Bindutrāya is a question which can only be answered on the admission that the hieroglyphic of three dots was, of yore, chosen to stand for *i*, and that, while its form has undergone modifications in consequence of either the carelessness of scribes or the loss or misunderstanding of tradition, its names took firm root in the unfailing memory of the Brāhmins. Anyhow, it is not unreasonable to hold that as the hieroglyphic of three dots has also the name *Indraṇī*,²⁹ wife of Indra, the initial syllable of this word might have suggested the possibility of this symbol standing for *i*. One more interesting point in connection with this symbol is the remark made by Bhaskarānanda in his commentary on *Varivasyārahasya*. He says that both the air and the letter *i* bear the name Bindutrāya. The air is so called, because it is full of *bindus*, particles.

The Devanāgarī letter *u* is called by the names *Uma*,³⁰ *Karna*, year, &c. While performing *Bijḍakṣharanyāsa*, which consists of repeating alphabetical letters, touching at the same time the several limbs and organs of the body with the four fingers of the right hand bent a little, and joined together, the thumb being put on the palm of the hand, the devotees of Sakti pronounce the letter *u*, touching their ears. This letter has the same form as the ear in the coins of Vāsudeva,³¹ and corresponds to the picture of the ear among the Suddyaḥ symbols given above. Hence, it stands to reason to hold that this symbol of the ear was selected to stand for the initial syllable of its name *Uma*.³²

The Devanāgarī letter *a* is called by the names *Amṛiteśvarī*,³³ goddess of nectar; *Amṛitakarṣiṇī*, drawing water or nectar into herself; and *Medhā*, intelligence. There has been a religious custom among the Hindus of all sects from time immemorial to worship as a goddess, at the commencement of all kinds of religious ceremonials, a *kalāśa*, or a vessel filled with water. There are also a number of poems describing Sakti as holding an *amṛitakalāśa* in her hand. It is not, I presume, far-fetched or unreasonable to suppose that at a time when the very name of sculpture was unknown and when pictorial writing was to religious worship what idolatry is now, the symbol of the *kalāśa* had the form of the letter under question and had a place in the pictorial representation of Sakti. Accordingly, it stands to reason that the symbol of the *amṛitakalāśa* stood for the initial syllable of that word. Or, as this letter bears also the name *medhā*, intelligence, and as the seat of intelligence is believed among Tantric worshippers to be the middle of the brows, it is likely that the symbol of that part of the body might have been selected to represent the letter *a*.

The Devanāgarī letter *ōm* is known by the synonymous names of *tāra*,³⁴ *tāraka* and *dhruva*, which mean the pole star. Making allowance for the gradual change which this hieroglyphic must, after it had acquired the function of representing the sound *om*, have undergone in the hands of careless scribes, I believe that, in its original form, it was nothing but a picture of the

²⁸ The Matt dates from the 8th century A. D., according to archaeological researches.

²⁹ See *Sabdakalpadruma* under 'i'.

³⁰ See *Ganeśa mantra* in the *Mantra Mahodadhī*.

³¹ Figs. 4 and 27, Plate III, *Ancient Hindu Coins from Jayapur and Ujjayin*.

³² See under the names of *u*. *Sabdakalpadruma*.

³³ See *Amṛiteśvarī* in the *Lalitāsahasranāma*.

³⁴ See the *Mantramahodadhī*.

pole star drawn for the purpose of worship. Whether star-worship was Âryan or aboriginal in its origin is a point which I leave for others to decide. So far as its observance among the Âryans is concerned, the phrases *âdrukopadeśa*, initiation in the mystery of star-worship, and *âdraka-brahmopadeśa*, initiation in the mystery of the worship of Star-Brahmâ, are, I think, sufficient proofs. It may be urged that the word *âdra*, does not, when applied as a name of the letter under consideration, mean a star, but a resonant, and that the word *dhruva* is applied as a name to the letter for the reason that sound is considered as a kind of manifestation of Brahman. But it has been seen how the words Kâma, Indrani, &c., do, as the names of *ka*, *i*, &c., establish their hieroglyphic origin and how it is impossible to find out a more reasonable explanation for the origin of those names than the one pointed out. It is not, therefore, unreasonable to hold that, like the names of other letters, the names of the letter *ôm* must also point out to the hieroglyphic picture of some natural and visible object connected with religious worship, and that ultimately the symbol representing 'star' was chosen to stand for the complex sound *ôm*.

It has been shown how the *bindu*, male or female creative principle, is described as the source not only of the world, but also of the alphabetic hieroglyphics which represent the world. Hence, it is more than likely that, when the hieroglyphics were selected to represent specific alphabetic sounds, the *bindu* dot was taken to represent the nasal sound in which all specific sounds are regarded as being merged.

It has already been seen how a white circular dot, together with a red circular dot, is taken to represent the male and female principles of creation. These two *bindus*, written one above the other, for the facility of entrance of the white into the red, are called by the name *visarga*, emission, and were, of course, taken to represent the *visarga* sound exclusively peculiar to the Sanskrit language. The credit due to the Brâhman *pandit* who invented, or, to speak strictly, selected from the Tantric hieroglyphics, this symbol to represent the *visarga* must be admitted on all hands. For, where else, if not in the Tantric symbols, can the inventor, or the formulator, to speak strictly in accordance with facts, of the Devanâgarî Alphabet find such a suitable symbol for the *visarga*. If he is to be given credit for selecting this symbol from the Tantric hieroglyphics, there is no reason to say with Prof. Bühler that the originator of the Devanâgarî Alphabet borrowed twenty-two letters from the North Semitic and derived the rest from his own imagination.

The conception of the Universe, as made up of the sky, the air, the fire, the region of clouds or water, and the earth, and as identical with the *pinḍandā*, individual human body, has already been dealt with. In the ninth stanza of the *Saundaryalahari* the goddess Sakti is thus described:—
'Thou art playing in the thousand-petaled lotus flower with thy consort in seclusion, having gone up by the path of *kulā*, spinal cord, after breaking through the earth, situated in *mûlādhāra*, prime support; the water in Manîpura, the waist bound by a zone of jewels of various colours; the fire in the navel, the air in the chest, the mind in the centre of the brows, and the sky above all these.'

Slightly different in meaning from the above are some passages in the *Mantramahodadhi*, which are quite interesting, inasmuch as they give the alphabetic letters which are derived from these five divisions of the human frame:—

३५ पादादि जातुपर्यन्तं चतुरश्रं सवच्चक्रम् ।
भूबीजं च स्वर्णवर्णं स्मरेद्वनिमण्डलम् ॥
जान्वाद्यानाभिं चन्द्रार्धनिभं पञ्चद्वयाङ्कितम् ।
वंबीजयुक्तं द्वैताभमम्भसां मण्डलं स्मरेत् ।

^{३५} Compare p. 105, *Sivârchanaśāhikā*; and p. 224, *Kulaprakāśatantra*; and p. 85, *Siddhānta-sāraśāli*.

नाभेर्हृदयपर्यन्तं त्रिकोणं स्वास्तिकान्वितम् ।
 रंवीजेन युतं रक्तं स्मरेत्पावकमण्डलम् ।
 इदो भूमध्यपर्यन्तं वृत्तं षड्बिन्दुलाञ्छितम्
 यंवीजयुक्तं धुम्नाभं मरुतो मण्डलं स्मरेत्-
 आन्नहारन्ध्रं भूमध्यावृत्तं स्वच्छमनोहरम् ।
 रंवीजयुक्तमाकाशमण्डलं प्राविचिन्तयेत् ॥

P. 3, Chap. I., *Mantramahodadhi*.

'The devotee has to contemplate as the golden earth on the rectangular portion of the body from the legs up to the knee-joints, with the *bījākshara* *la*, which is also the *bījākshara* of Vajra, the weapon of Indra. He has also to meditate as a mass of white water on the semi-circular portion from the knee-joints to the navel, with its *bījākshara* *va*, and marked with the figures of two lotus flowers. He has to recollect as the fiery region that triangular portion of the body which extends from the navel to the heart and which is red, decked with a *svastika* symbol and the *bījākshara* *ra*. He has similarly to recollect as the sphere of air that portion of the body which extends from the heart to the middle of the brows, and which is in the form of brown circle, decked with six dots and the *bījākshara* *ya*. And he has to meditate as the sky on that pure and circular portion of the body which extends from the centre of the brows to the Brahmarandhra, a hole on the top of the head, and which is decked with its *bījākshara* *ha*.

A reference to Plate VIII. will clearly show how closely the Devanâgarî *la* identifies itself with the hieroglyphic representing the earth and strongly disclaims the parentage sought for it by Prof. Bühler in the Semitic *lamed*. With regard to this letter, the following passage occurs in the *Yoginîhrîdaya* :—

वसुन्धरागतो गन्धस्तल्लिपिर्गन्धवाचकः

P. 41.

'The earth contains smelling substance. Hence the word *lipi*, smearing, suggests a smelling substance.'

The above passage is thus annotated in its commentary :—

वसुन्धरायाः पृथिव्या गुणो गन्धः
 तल्लिपिः पृथिवीवाचको वर्णो लकारः

'The characteristic property of the earth is scent. Hence the word *lipi*, daubing with scent, suggests the earth. Hence the letter *l* (which is the initial sound of that word) denotes the earth.'

All that is meant in the commentary is the selection of the hieroglyphic representing the earth for the letter *l*, with some show of reasoning to justify the selection. We may, therefore, assume that similar line of reasoning as the above one guided the selection of other hieroglyphics for other letters.

Regarding the letter *va*, the *Vātulāgama* says as follows :—

वकारं वारुणं ह्यापदचतुर्थं मेदासि स्थितम् ।
 जलस्य यानि नामानि सन्ति तान्यपराणि च ।
 वकारस्यापि नामानि

P. 51, *Vātulāgama*.

‘The letter *va* is sacred to Varuṇa, the god of waters, and to waters. It has its abode in the marrow, being the fourth in the order of creation (of the body). Whatever names there are for waters are also the names of the letter *va*.’

The ancient Devanāgarī letter *va* is more plainly identical with one of the lotus buds of the hieroglyphics representing the waters, or the waist, than with the Semitic *waw*. (See Plates I. and VIII.)

The letter *ra*³⁶ is regarded as sacred to fire and bears the name Rakta among its other names synonymous with fire. In his commentary on the *Varivasyādrahasya*, Bhāskarānanda compares the symbol of fire and of the letter *ra* to the smoky zone of a flame:—

दीपाग्नस्थितकज्जललेखावत्

‘The letter *ra* is like the smoky zone that stands just above a flame.’

This symbol, being called Rakta, seems to have stood for the initial letter of that word and has a better resemblance to the ancient Devanāgarī letter than the Semitic *aesh*. (See Plates I. and VIII.)

The Devanāgarī letter *ya* can be no other than the picture of the nose, for regarding this letter, the *Mantramahodadhi* says as follows:—

वायुबीजं स्मरन्वायुं सम्पूर्येमं विशोषयेत् ।

स्वशरीरयुतं मन्त्री वह्निबीजेन निर्वहेत्

.

वहिर्भस्म समुत्सार्य वायुबीजेन रेचयेत् ।

P. 4, Chap. 1, *Mantramahodadhi*.

‘The devotee should, contemplating the *biṣa* of air, inhale the air which, on being made dry inside his body, he should reduce to ashes by the *biṣa* of fire (*ra*). Having forced out the ashes, he should exhale the air through the *biṣa* of air.’

The word *vāyubīja* in the above passage means both the nostril and the Devanāgarī letter *ya*, for contemplation on the *biṣa* of air is nothing but thinking of *ya*; and exhaling the air through *vāyubīja* must necessarily mean breathing out the air through the nostrils.

The *Siddhanta-saravali* says:—

पृथिव्यादीनि बीजानि लवरयहकारकाः

‘The *biṣas*, hieroglyphics of the five elements, are *la*, *va*, *ra*, *ya* and *ha*, respectively, commencing from the earth.’

In the edicts of Aśoka the letter *ya* has the same form as the nose. Hence it may be argued that the symbol representing the nose of god Śiva was taken to stand for the Sanskrit *ya* sound.

The letter *ha*³⁷ is called by the names Śiva, *gagana*, the sky, and *hamsa*, the sun, and has in its ancient form a better resemblance to the hieroglyphic representing the skull or the head of Śiva than to the Semitic *he*. (See Plates I. and VIII.) It is more than probable that the symbol of the sky stood for the initial sound of its name *hamsa*.

³⁶ Page 51, *Vāṭulājama*.

³⁷ See under *ha*, *Sābdakalpadrumā*.

The description of the goddess Sakti, as armed with bow and other weapons, has already been referred to. In the *Mantramahodadhī* the military array of the goddess is thus described:—

पाशं चापं लक्ष्मणाले सुगीषून्
शूलं हस्तैर्विभ्रतीं रक्तवर्णाम् ।
रक्तोद्विज्ज्योतरक्ताम्बुजस्थां
देवीं ध्यायेत्प्राणशक्तिं त्रिनेत्राम् ॥

Stanza 61, Chap. I.

'The goddess — who bears in her hands a rope or noose, a bow, a garland or a chain, a skull, a bulb-headed cudgel, arrows, and a trident, who being of red colour is standing on a red lotus flower, situated in a boat launched in the ocean of blood, and who is the vital power and is possessed of three eyes — the devotee has to contemplate.'

While describing the weapons of the guardian deities of the ten quarters, the hieroglyphics of the weapons are thus identified with alphabetic letters:—

वक्ष्येऽधुना मनोस्तस्योद्धारं ध्यात्तसुखावहम् ।
पाशं मायां सृणिं प्रोच्य याहीन्संसेन्दुसंयुतान् ।
तारान्वितं नभस्सप्तवर्णं मन्त्रं ततो जपेत् ॥

Verses 70, 71, Chap. I.

'I shall now talk of the extraction of that *mantra* which is comfortable to the meditator. Having pronounced the three syllables that stand for the nose, the goddess Māya, and the cudgel, and having also pronounced the seven letters, beginning from *ya* and ending with *sa*, together with *h* combined with *o* (the sky combined with the star), all these eight letters being combined with the nasal sound (Indu, moon), the devotee has to chant the seven-lettered *mantra* (namely, *ya, ra, la, va, sa, sha, and sa*).'

It has been seen how the ancient Devanāgarī letters *la, va, ra* and *ya* are, as the *bijaksharas* of the earth, water, fire and air, the exact representations of the legs, the waist, the arm or a line going up from the navel, and of the nose. Hence, it seems probable that, owing to the loss or misunderstanding of tradition, the same letters are here called as sacred to the weapons, such as a noose, a bow, a chain, and a cudgel. In his commentary on *Lalitāsahasranāma*,³⁸ Bhāskarānanda regards the dental letters *tha, da* and *dha* as the *bijaksharas* of the bow. Likewise, Lolla, in his commentary on the *Saundaryalahari*,³⁹ calls the compound syllables *drām* and *drim* as the *bijaksharas* of the arrows. Hence, we may take any one of the letters *tha, da, dha*, preferably *dha*, as having once been the hieroglyphics representing *dhanus*, the bow. Also it can be easily perceived how the letters *da* and *dha* have a better and clearer affinity to the Tantric symbol of the bow than to the Semitic *daleth*. It may therefore be taken for certain that the hieroglyphic representing *dhanus*, the bow, was selected to stand for the initial sound of its name. The derivation of the letters *tha* and *da* from the same symbol, or probably the selection of different kinds of the symbols of bow for *tha* and *da*, is more evident than their derivation, as fancied by Prof. Bühler from the Semitic *daleth*. (See Plates I. and VIII.)

Equally clear is the selection of the letter *sa*, from the symbol representing *sara*, arrow. The symbol of trident, *śūla* or *triśūla*, seems to have been selected for *sha*, while any one of the symbols of *pāśa*, noose, and *sraḥ*, garland or chain, seems to have stood for *sa*, the initial sound of *sraḥ*.

³⁸ See under the name *Krodhākārāṅkuśojjala*, *Lalitāsahasranāma*.

³⁹ Stanza 19, *Saundaryalahari*.

The letter *pa* bears such names as *dakṣhapāśva*,⁴⁰ right side of the trunk; *śaṇḍāh*, the commander of an army; *marīchiḥ*, ray of light; *pavanah*, the air; and *śaniḥ*, the planet Saturn. It is needless to say that in its ancient form this letter has a better resemblance to the right side of the trunk than to the Semitic *phe* turned, according to Prof. Bühler, topsy-turvy. As the symbol of the right side of the trunk bore the names *pāśva* or side and *pavana* or the air, it seems to have easily lent itself as a symbol for the initial sound of those words. (See Plates I. and VIII.) The *suddyaḥ* symbols referred to above clearly testify to the existence of two symbols for the right and left sides of the trunk.

The Devanāgarī letter *ma* is called by such names as *viṣa*, poison; *mahāvīra*, great warrior; *mahākāya*, of great belly or body; *Meru*, &c. It has been shown how the ancient Devanāgarī *ma* resembles a serpent, indicating poison. Being called by *meru* and other names beginning with *m*, the symbol of a cobra round the waist of the god Siva seems to have lent itself more easily for the letter *ma* than the Semitic *mem*, with its top chopped off and its belly created and swollen, could do.

The letter *kha* bears the name *khātita*, beyond the sky or the head which corresponds to it in the human frame. Accordingly, the ancient Devanāgarī *kha* must have been clearly represented by the symbol of *unmanī* or *unmandh*, to which the letter *kha* bears a better resemblance than to the Semitic *qoph*, which indeed might better be the Devanāgarī *chha*, turned topsy-turvy. The symbol of *khātita* or *unmanī*, mind going up, could easily stand for the initial sound of its name.

The letters *gha* and *cha* are called *ghaṇṭadhārīṇī* and *chamamundādhara*, respectively. Regarding the goddess Chandi holding a bell in her hand as implied by the first word, and bearing a head with its skin not removed, as conveyed by the last word, the *Mantramahodadhī* says as follows :—

खड्गं चक्रगदेषु चापपरिधानं शूलं भृशुण्डीं शिरः
 शङ्खं सन्धर्तनीं करैस्त्रिनयनां सर्वाङ्गभूषावृतान् ।
 यामस्तौस्त्वपिते हरौ कमलजो हन्तुं मधुं कैटभं
 नीलाश्मद्युतिमास्यपाददशानां सेवे महाकालिकाम् ॥
 अक्षसक्परशुगदेषुकुलिशं पञ्च धनुः कुण्डिकां
 वण्डं शक्तिमसि च चर्म जलजं घण्टां सुराभाजनम् ।
 शूलं पाशसुदर्शने च दधतीं हस्तैः प्रवालप्रभां
 सेवे सौरिभार्दिनीमिह महालक्ष्मीं सरोजोद्भवाम् ॥

Stanzas 144 and 145, Chap. 18.

'I adore that great goddess Kālī, whose mouth, legs and teeth are as shining as a blue stone, who, possessed of three eyes, is not only decked with all kinds of ornaments all over her body, but is also armed with a sword, a discus, a club, arrows, a bow, an iron bludgeon, a lance, a shield, a head, and a conch-shell, and whom the Creator, with a view to destroy the demons, Madhu and Kaitabha, when god Vishnu was asleep, extolled for protection.

'I adore that great goddess of Wealth, who is born of the collected energy of the gods, who bears in her hands such as a rosary, a battle-axe, a club, arrows, the thunderbolt, a lotus flower, a bow, a drinking vessel, a rod, a hatchet, a sword, a skin of water-animals, a bell, a liquor-bottle, a lance, a noose, and the discus of Vishnu, and who, as bright as a coral-stone, destroyed the demon Sairibha.'

The legend of the destruction of Madhu and Kaitabha is found described not only in almost all the *Purāṇas*, but also, curiously enough, in the Jaina literature.⁴¹ Hence, the description of the

⁴⁰ See under *Pa*, *Sabdakalpādruma*.

⁴¹ P. 238, *Samavayanga Sutra*.

goddess Chandi, as bearing a bell and a head during the destruction of the demons, cannot be a recent fancy. Accordingly, it may be assumed that, in the pictorial representation of Sakti, such hieroglyphics as could represent a bell and a head found a place, and that during the time of the formation of the Devanāgarī Alphabet, those symbols were selected to stand for the respective initial sounds of their names. It is unnecessary to say that the symbols of a bell and a head bear a closer resemblance to the ancient Devanāgarī *gha* and *cha* than the Semitic *cheih* and *tsade* do to the Brāhma letters. (See Plates I. and VIII.)

The letter *ta* goes by the names *tanka*, a sickle; *ardhaachandra*, the half-moon; *kamaṇḍalu*, a drinking vessel peculiar to the ascetics; and in its ancient form has a better resemblance to them than to the Semitic *taw* or *theth*.

The character *na* seems to have resulted from the symbol of *nāḍānta*, end of sound, as it approximately resembles it rather than the Semitic *nun*.

DEVANAGARI ALPHABET.

English.	Ancient Devanagari letters	Tantric Hieroglyphics.	Names of the Hieroglyphics.
k	†	†	Kâma, Śiva.
e	Δ	Δ	Ekapâda, Ekâdaśâdhâra, Śakti, &c.
i	∴, ∴, ∴	∴	Indrânî, Kâmi-kalâ.
a	κ, η, θ, □	κ, η, υ	Amrtâ Kalasa, Amrtêsvari.
u	ℓ, ∫,	∫	Uma, Karṇa.
o	⊙, ⊙	⊙	Târa, Dhruva.
m̐	o	o	Bindu.
h	∴	∴	Visarga, Agnishômiya.
l	ℓ, ∫, ∫	ℓ, ∫, ∫	Kshiti, Lipi, Pâdan.
v	∫, ∫	∫, ∫	Varuṇa, Manipûra, Padma.
r	ℓ, ℓ, ℓ	ℓ, ℓ	Rakta, Bhuja, Dipagrakajjala.
y	ℓ, ∫, ∫, ∫	ℓ, ∫,	Vâyu, Nâśika.
s		∫, ∫, ∫	Śara.
sh	π, π	ℓ, ℓ, ℓ	Śûla.
s	ℓ, ℓ, ℓ	∫, ∫	Pasa, Srâk.
h	ℓ, ℓ, ℓ	∫, ∫, ∫	Kapâla, Déha, Sirah.
dh	∫, ∫	∫, ∫	Dhanuh.
d	∫, ∫, ∫, ∫	∫, ∫	Dhanuh.
p	ℓ, ℓ	ℓ, ℓ	Dakshinapârśva, Pârśva.
M	∫, ∫	∫, ∫	Visha, Mahâkâya, Mêru.
Kh	∫, ∫	ℓ, ∫	Khâtita, Unmanî.
Gh	□, ℓ, ℓ	∫, ∫	Ghaṭṭâdhârinî.
Ch	ℓ, ∫	∫	Charmamuṇḍadhârinî.
T	ℓ	∫, ∫	Tanka, Ardhashandra.
Ct.	ℓ, ∫, ∫	∫, ∫	Nâdânta.

DEVANAGARI ALPHABET.

Plate IX.

A.

THE PRIMARY LETTERS AND THEIR DERIVATIVES.

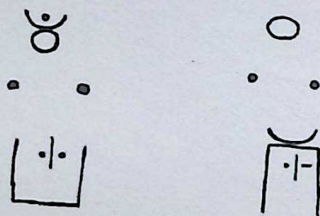
Primary letters.	Derivatives.
ॐ	^ = ga.
।	⌈ = na, ॢ = ña, I = na.
८	○ = tha, ८ = dh, ^ = ta, ⊙ = tha
ॡ	ॡ = da.
ॢ	ॢ = pha, □ = b, ॣ = bha.

B.

DERIVATION OF MANTRAS.

1. Mantra: Klîm = K + l + i + m = .| + ॢ + .° + ॐ

Hence the forms of Klîm.



2. Mantra: Hrîm = h + r + i + m = U + | + .° + ॐ

Hence the form of Hrîm.



CHAPTER V.

The Derivatives.

Plate IX.

Thus are the Devanāgarī letters *a, i, u, e, o, ka, kha, gha, cha, ṭa, da, dha, na, pa, ma, ya, ra, la, va, śa, sha, sa, ha*, the *visarga* and the nasal sound to be identified with the Tantric hieroglyphics by a far smaller stretch of imagination than that involved in Prof. Bühler's latest theory of the Semitic origin of the Devanāgarī Alphabet. The question that now arises is, how the rest of the forty-eight or forty-nine letters have been contrived? For evidently, there were no hieroglyphics from which the rest could be as easily selected as the twenty-two or twenty-three letters described. With regard to this question, the very words of Prof. Bühler can be repeated, only replacing the words 'borrowed sign' by 'indigenous hieroglyphic.'

The contrivances by which the derivative signs, both primary and secondary, for consonants and initial vowels have been formed, are:—

- (1) The transposition of one of the elements of a phonetically cognate indigenous hieroglyphic.
- (2) The mutilation of a hieroglyphic or of another derivative sign of a similar phonetic value.
- (3) The addition of straight lines, curves or hooks to original or derivative symbols.

The complete elaboration of the Brāhmī Alphabet by the process of differentiation of the original hieroglyphics or of their derivatives, is not only indicated by the similarity of cognate alphabetic letters to one another, but is also distinctly referred to in the *Vāṭulāgama*:—

अकारं च इकारं च उकारं च ऋकारकम् ।
 लकारं चैव एकारं तथैवैकारमेव च ॥
 एते सप्त स्वराः प्रोक्ताः प्रकृतिस्तु समीरिताः ।
 शेषास्तु विकृतिः प्रोक्ताः तेषामुद्भवमुच्यते ॥
 अकाराद्यौद्भवाकारमिकारेत्वीसमुद्भवः ॥

P. 28. *Vāṭulāgama*.

'The seven vowels *a, i, u, ṛi, li, e* and *o* are declared to be primary letters. The rest of the vowels are the modifications of the primary ones. The formation of the modified letters is thus described: from *a* originated the long *ā*, and from *i* the long *ī*.'

Indeed the formation of the letters *ṛi* and *li* from primary hieroglyphics, as alluded to in the above verses, is somewhat doubtful; still there is no reason to doubt the complete manipulation of the Devanāgarī by differentiation of the primary letters or symbols. Even Prof. Bühler, who went so far as to seek a Semitic source for the Devanāgarī, admits the ability of the Brāhman *pandit* or *pandits* in the arrangement of the letters. In *The Origin of the Brāhma Alphabet* (p. 86) he says:—

"One of the undeniable results of the preceding inquiry is that the Brāhma Alphabet must be considered the work of Brāhmans, acquainted with phonetic and grammatical theories. The *pandit's* hand is clearly visible in the arrangement of the letters used by Aśoka's masons at Mahabodhi Gaya, according to their organic value as vowels, diphthongs, nasalised vowel, vowel with the spirant, gutturals, palatals and linguals. And it is also visible at a much earlier stage in the very formation of the alphabet. Nobody but a grammarian or phoneticist would have thought of deriving five nasals, one of each class of the Indian consonants from the two Semitic prototypes, and of inventing in addition a sign to denote the nasalization of vowels, the *anusvāra* or of forming two spirants *ha* and

the *visarga*. Nobody but a Sanskrit grammarian would express the initial *u* by half the sign for *va* and the phonetically very different, but etymologically allied, *śa* and *sa* by modifications of one sign, or derive initial *o* from *u* or *i* from *e* and *la* and from *da*. And only a grammarian would invent the peculiar system of notation for medial vowels, which throughout marks the distinction between short and long ones, omits the short *a*, and expresses the long *ā* by adding to the consonants the mark used for differentiating *Ā* from *A*, and the remaining medial vowels by combinations of the initial vowel signs, or of modifications thereof, with the consonants. This is so complicated and so highly artificial that only a Brāhman's or *pandit*'s ingenuity can have worked it out."

While thus praising the *pandit* for his ingenuity and thorough scholarship in Sanskrit grammar and phonetics in elaborating and arranging the Devanāgarī Alphabet, Prof. Bühler had to find fault with him for his pedantic formalism in wilfully changing the forms of the Semitic models, which the Professor presumed that he learnt from Indian merchants with Semitic people. Had the twenty-two Brāhma letters, however, nearly resembled the Semitic models, the *pandit* would, in the view of the Professor, have been a well-behaved school-boy, worthy of still more laudatory words. But, as has already been seen, the letters look more like the Tantric hieroglyphics, of which the Professor was not at all aware, than the Semitic aliens in which he sought for their parentage. Had he consulted the literary records which the *pandit* has left behind him, he could have gathered the information that, instead of going for the Semitic models, the *pandit* merely went to the Tantric worshippers for his models. In return for the loan of models which the *pandit* received from the Tantric worshippers, he immensely extended the scope for the evolutionary growth of the Tantric literature. Had not the Devanāgarī Alphabet sprung up from the hieroglyphics or ideograms representing the god Śiva and the goddess Śakti, it would not have carried throughout its letters so many names of gods or goddesses. Nor would the four kinds of identities which form the basis of Tantric mystery and speculation have originated. The identity of *nāda*, the nine or twelve hieroglyphics described above, with (1) the body of the devotee, (2) with the body of the god or goddess, (3) with the alphabetic letters (*pañcāśatkalah*) or with the monosyllabic *mantras*, and the identity of the devotee with the god or goddess, are the chief causes of the endless speculations⁴² of Tantric scholars. The identity of the goddess with the alphabet (*bhūta-lipi*) is thus described in the Kāma-kala Chidvalli:—

द्विविधा हि मध्यमा सा सूक्ष्मा स्थूलाकृतिस्त्विषा सूक्ष्मा.

नवनादमयी स्थूला नववर्गोत्पा तु भूतलिप्याख्या.

'The goddess called Madhyama, middle, has two aspects. She is either of subtle or of visible form. The nine kinds of articulate sounds constitute her subtle and eternal form. The nine groups of the alphabetic letters make up her visible form.'

It may even be said that, if the Devanāgarī Alphabet had not resulted from the Tantric hieroglyphics, there would have been no Tantric literature at all. For the whole of Tantric literature treats of nothing but the recitation of monosyllabic *mantras* and the drawing of mystic figures, which, in their origin, must have been the pictures of the several parts of the human frame. The *Vātulāgama* says:—

देवानां बीजनामानि वर्णास्तत्र प्रकल्पिताः

तस्माद्दर्शनानि चोक्तानि ज्ञात्वा मन्त्रं समुद्धरेत् ॥

P. 35, *Vātulāgama*.

'The gods are called the seeds (*बीज*) of the world. Alphabetical letters are elaborated out of (the hieroglyphics representing) the seeds.'

Hence, it is necessary to have a thorough knowledge of the letters before going to make up the *mantras*. And—

तत्तद्देवतानामभिधानाक्षरमेव तत्तद्देवतानामङ्गं भवति.

P. 80, *Com. Vātulāgama*.

⁴² See pp. 134 and 222, *Comm. Saundaryalahari*, M. O. L. Edition; pp. 7, 54, 55, 56 and 78, *Partivaryarahasya*, Bombay Edition.

'The alphabetic letters which bear the names of those and other gods or goddesses form the very bodily frames of those and other gods or goddesses.'

Thus, for example, the *mantras*, **klīm**, called the *bījāḥshara* of Kāma, and **hrīm**, the *bījāḥshara* of Sakti, constitute, as in Plate IX., the forms of Kāma and Sakti. The same result would ensue in all cases of such *mantras* as are not later manipulations of ignorant mystics. Thus, it is only in the identity of the Tantric hieroglyphics with the letters of the Devanāgarī Alphabet that we can find satisfactory explanations for almost all kinds of Tantric technical terms and speculations.

Besides the ocular and documentary evidences proving the indigenous origin of the Devanāgarī Alphabet, as pointed out above, there is also the evidence furnished by the critical analysis which James Prinsep made of the alphabet of the edicts of Aśoka. It is very well known that, but for his admirable skill in deciphering the then unknown alphabet of the edicts, the history of India, broken and unreliable as it is, would have missed its basis altogether. It is really astonishing and admirable that his critical analysis of the alphabet of the edicts of Aśoka should have enabled him to arrive at almost the same primary letters that, as has already been seen, were first selected with no appreciable modification from among the hieroglyphics and next formed the basis for the complete manipulation of the rest of the letters by differentiation. As his observation (pp. 474—6, Vol. VI., J. A. S. B.) throws a flood of light on the process of derivation of the rest of the letters, and also on the peculiar compact forms of the letters in general, his remarks are quoted here in full :—

"There is a primitive simplicity in the form of every letter, which stamps it at once as the original type whereon the more complicated structure of the Sanskrit has been founded. If carefully analysed, each member of the alphabet will be found to contain the element of the corresponding member, not only of the Devanāgarī, but of the Kanauj, the Pāli, the Tibetan, the Hale Canara and of all the derivatives from the Sanskrit stock. This is not all: simplification may be carried much further by due attention to the structure of the alphabet, as it existed even at this early stage, and the genius of its construction, *ab initio*, may in some measure be recognised and appreciated. First the aspirated letters appear to have been formed in most cases by doubling the simple letters; thus, **ḥ**, *chh*, is the double of **ḥ**, *cha*; **ṭh**, *th*, is the double of **ṭ**, *t*; **ḍh**, *dh*, is the half of this; and **ṣh**, *sh*, is the same character with a dot as a distinguishing mark. This may account for the constant interchange of **ṣ**, **ḥ**, **ṭ** and **ṣh** in the inscriptions. Again **ḍh**, *dh*, is only the letter **ḍ** produced from **ḍh** below; — if doubled, it would have been confounded with another letter (the **ḍh**). The aspirated **ḥ**, *pha*, is merely the **ḥ**, *pa*, with a slight mark, sometimes put on the outside, either right or left; but I cannot yet affirm that this mark may not merely denote a duplication of the letter rather than an aspiration,—if, indeed, the terms were not originally equivalent; for we have just seen the doubling of the letter made to denote its aspiration. The **ḥh** seems formed from the **ḥ** rather than the **ḥ**. The **gh** and **jh** are missing as in Tibetan, and appear to be supplied by **g** and **chh** respectively. **Bh** is anomalous, or it has been formed from the **ḍ** by adding a downward stroke.

"Again, there is a remarkable analogy of form in the semi-vowels, **r**, **ṛ**, **l**, **y**, **ḷ**, **j**, **ṣ**, **ḷ**, which tends to prove their having been framed on a consistent principle. The first **r** hardly ever occurs in the Delhi inscription, but it is common in that form in that from Girnar. The **ḷ**, *h*, is but the **ḷ** reversed: the **ṛi**, so peculiar to the Sanskrit alphabet, is formed by adding the vowel *i* to the **r**, thus **ṛi**.

"As far as yet known, there are only one **h** and one **s**: the nasals and sibilants had not therefore been yet separated into classes; for the written Pāli of 200 years later possesses at last the various **n**'s, though it has but one **s**. The four vowels, initials, have been discovered **ḥ**, **ṛ**, **ḍ**, **ḷ**; the second seems to be the skeleton of the third, as if denoting the smallest possible vocal sound. Of the medial vowels, it is needless to speak, as their agreement in system with the old Nāgarī was long since pointed out. The two long vowels **i** and **ḍ** are produced by doubling the short symbols. The *visarga* is of doubtful occurrence; but the *anusvāra* is constantly employed; and when before **m** as **ḍḥ**, it is equivalent to the duplication employed in the more modern Pāli writing.

"We might, perhaps, on contemplation of these forms, go yet farther into speculation on their origin. Thus, the *g* may be supposed to be formed of the two strokes of the *k*, differently disposed, the *j* of the two half curves of the *cha* superposed. The two *d*'s are the same letter turned right and left, respectively; and this principle, it may be remarked, is to be met with in other scions of the Indian alphabet. Thus, in the Tibetan, the Σ , Ξ , a sound unknown to the Sanskrit, is made by inverting the *j*, Ξ ; the cerebral η , Ξ , by inverting the dental Σ — and the cerebral *t*, *th*; or Ξ , Ξ , by the inversion of the dental *t*, *th*, Ξ , Ξ .

"The analogy between the Σ and Λ is not so great in this alphabet as in what we have imagined to be its successor, in which the essential part of the *t* (Λ) is the Σ placed downwards $\cap$.

"In the same manner the connection of the labials *p* and *b* is more visible in the old Ceylonese, the Canouji and even the Tibetan alphabets; the $\sqcup$, $\diamond$, being merely the *p*, $\sqcup$, closed at the top as in square Pāli $\sqcup$ and $\square$.

"Thus, when we come to examine the matter critically, we are insensibly led to the reduction of the written Characters to a comparatively small number of elements as $\vdash$, $\mathcal{C}$, $\mathcal{C}$, $\mathcal{C}$, $\mathcal{C}$, $\mathcal{C}$, $\mathcal{C}$, $\mathcal{C}$, $\mathcal{C}$ and $\mathcal{C}$, besides the vowels $\mathcal{H}$, $\mathcal{D}$ and $\mathcal{L}$ or perhaps in lieu of this arrangement, it may be preferable to adopt one element as representative of the seven classes of letters. We shall thus come to the very position long ago advanced by Jambulus, the traveller."

It is really astonishing to find such a remarkable coincidence between the facts recorded in Tantric literature regarding the Devanāgarī on the one hand, and the conclusions arrived at on mature considerations of the forms of the alphabet of Aśoka on the other. It may, therefore, be admitted that, with the exception of twenty-two or fifteen (*pañchadasī*) letters, for which the Tantric hieroglyphics have been, as shown above, actually selected, all the Characters of the Brāhmī Alphabet are the results of differentiation of those primary letters or symbols.

It seems more than probable that, with a view to facilitate the retention in memory of the form of the symbols with the aid of some roundabout process of reasoning, each of the symbols of the alphabet (*bhūtalipi*), thus elaborated, was called by a new name, the initial of which corresponded to the alphabetic sound. While performing *nyāsa*, a process of identifying the several parts of one's own body with one or another of the several goddesses, the following fifty words are recited by every one of Tantric worshippers. So far as I make out, the identification is in some cases wrong. These words are:—

I.

अमृता (nectar).
आकर्षिणी (attractive).
इन्द्राणी (wife of Indra).
ईशानी (wife of Siva).
उमा " "
ऊर्ध्वकेशिनी (possessed of hair standing upright or erect).
ऋद्धिः (prosperity).
ऋषा (?).

लता (?).
लषा (?) (the long *li* is inappropriate or anamolous).
एकपादिनी (having one leg).
ऐश्वरी (goddess of prosperity).
ओङ्कारिणी (abiding in *om*).
औषधालिका (herbose).
अम्बिका (mother).
अक्षरालिका (of alphabetic form).

II.

कालरात्री (dark night).
खातीता (beyond the sky).
गायत्री (a *mantra* of that name).
घण्टाधारिणी (possessed of a bell).
ढाणालिका (identical with *n* sound).
चण्डा (goddess of that name).

धाया (shade).
जया (victory).
झङ्कारिणी (making or abiding in *jham*).
ज्ञानरूपा (having the form of knowledge).
टङ्कहस्ता (having a sickle in her hand).
ठङ्कारिणी (making or abiding in *tham*).

III.

डामरी (roaring).
 डंकारिणी (making or abiding in *dham*).
 णामिनी (?).
 तामसी (dark as night).
 यामिनी (?).

दाक्षायणी (daughter of Daksha).
 धात्री (protector).
 नन्दा (pleasant).
 पार्वती (daughter of a mountain).
 फट्टारिणी (making a noise like *phat*).

IV.

बन्धिनी (binding).
 भद्रकाली (auspicious goddess of that name).
 महाकाया (possessed of a large body).

यशस्विनी (famous).
 रक्ता (red).
 लम्बोष्ठी (with projected lip).

V.

वरदा (bestowing gifts).
 शशिनी (having the moon).

षण्डा (?).
 सरस्वती (goddess of that name).

VI.

हंसवती (having a goose ?).

क्षमावती⁴³ (merciful).

P. 3, *Purvāśhodhānyāsa*.⁴⁴

There can, therefore, be nothing to prevent us from accepting as true the idea that is embodied in the following verses :—

भकारादिक्षकारान्तवर्णवयवसुन्दरीम्.

Chap. 16, *Dakṣiṇāmūrtisaṃhita* (p. 59).

(I bow to) that goddess who is brilliant with her bodily members formed of the letters from a to ksha.'

पञ्चाशन्निजरेहजाक्षरभवेनानविधैर्धातुभिः
 बह्वर्थैः पदवाक्यमानजनकैर्यादिनाभावितैः
 साभिप्रायवर्त्यकर्मफलदैः ख्यातैरनन्तैरिदं
 विद्वं व्याप्य चिदात्मनाहमहमित्युज्जृम्भसे मातके ।⁴⁵

Mahinmastotra by Krodhabhaṭṭaraka.

'Having as knowledge pervaded the whole of the Universe with verbal roots which are of various form and meaning, which are the product of the fifty alphabetic letters born of thy body, which give birth to words, phrases, and sentences inseparably combined with their senses and which are immensely famous for having given rise to philosophic discussions and texts, dealing with rituals and ceremonial merits, dost thou, O Picture of the Mother of the World (alphabet), exhibit thyself as "I and I alone."'

Can we not, then, say *Amen* to the following prayer of the Jains who, as apostates from Brahmanism, hated almost every thing that was Brahmanic, but still, in appreciation of the benefits conferred on them, as on others, by the invention of the Brāhmī alphabet by Brāhmins, readily bowed to that *Lipi*? —

गमा बम्मीए लिप्पीए.⁴⁶

'Salutation to the alphabet which originated from (the hieroglyphics, representative of) Brahma.'

⁴³ Compare p. 74, *Varivasyādrāhasya* and *Nyāsa* in *Yoginidīpika*.

⁴⁴ All these words are collected in six groups.

⁴⁵ Compare st. 81, ch. I., *Mantramah*, and Part III., *Tripurātāpini Upaniṣad*.

⁴⁶ Introductory passage, *Bhagavatī Sātra*.

Appendix.

Plate X.

Wrong as are, in the view now put forward, the conclusions arrived at by Professor Bühler regarding the origin of the Devanāgarī Alphabet, still it cannot be denied that there exists a resemblance between the two alphabets, the Semitic and the Indian. More striking, indeed, is the similarity of forms between the Greek and the Sanskrit alphabets. Regarding this similarity, James Prinsep observes as follows⁴⁷ :—

“This striking similarity becomes more palpable, the farther we retire into antiquity, the older the monuments we have to decipher ; so that even now while we are quite green in the study, we might almost dare to advance (with the fear of M. Raoule De Rochette before us) that the oldest Greek (that written like the Phœnician from right to left) was nothing more than Sanskrit turned topsy-turvy ! A striking proposition this for those who have so long implicitly believed in Cadmus and the introduction from Egypt of what, perchance, never existed there. Yet, there is nothing very new nor very unnatural in the hypothesis ; since the connection of the Greek with the Phœnician and Samaritan alphabets has been admitted as a strong evidence that the ‘use of letters travelled progressively from Chaldea to Phœnicia and thence along the coasts of the Mediterranean,’ and the Greek language is now so indisputably proved to be but a branch of the Sanskrit stem, that it is not likely that it should have separated from its parent without carrying away some germs of the art of writing, already perhaps brought to perfection by the followers of Brahmā. But my arguments are not those of books or learning or even tradition, but solely of graphic similitude and ocular evidence.

“The Greek letters are dressed by a line at the foot, in most cases, as Α, Δ, Λ, Μ, Ω, Υ, &c. The Devanagāri are made even along the upper surface of the letters, and in later ages a straight line has been introduced at the top from which the grammatic elements are suspended. The Greek alphabet is devoided of all system and has had additions made to it at various times. Some of these, as Φ, Χ, Ψ, Ω, are precisely those which present the least resemblance to the Sanskrit forms. I give my evidence on Plate X. (Plate XXIV., Vol. III., J. A. S. B.) taking my Greek types from the well-formed letters on coins and from the *boustrophedon* tablet of Sigeum.

“Of the vowels, Α, Ι, Ο and Υ present a striking conformity with the vowels अ, इ, and the semi-vowels ए and ऋ of the oldest Sanskrit alphabets inverted. The vowel Ε is not reconcilable and resembles more the short E of the Zend. The long Η is a later introduction and appears to be merely the iteration of the short vowel Ι as ω is of οο.

“In the consonants we find Β, Γ, Δ, Ζ, Θ, Κ, Λ, Μ, Ν, Π, Ρ, Σ, Τ, in fact, every one of the letters excepting those of after-invention, are represented with considerable exactness by the व (or double व्व), ग, घ, ङ, च, छ, ज, झ, ञ, ट, ठ, ड, ढ, न, प, फ, ब, भ, म, य, र, ल, व, श, ष, स, ह, ळ, ण, त, थ, द, ध, न, प, र, ज, त, of the oldest Sanskrit Alphabet, although there is hardly a shadow of resemblance between any pair in their modern forms. The same precision cannot be expected in every case. The Β, Δ, Θ, Λ, Μ, Ν, Π, Ρ, Υ, require, like the vowels, to be viewed in an inverted position. The Γ and Ε remain unturned. The Ζ and Κ require to be partially turned. The Α and Ν may be thought a little far-fetched. The Β taken from the double β and the Δ from the aspirated φ may also be objected to ; but taking a comprehensive view of the whole, it seems to me impossible that so constant and so close a conformity of the alphabetical symbols of two distant nations should exist without affording demonstration of a common origin. Whether the priority is to be conceded to the Greeks, the Pelasgians or the Hindus, is a question requiring great research and not less impartiality to determine.”

Besides this ocular evidence regarding the relation of the Eastern and Western alphabets, there appears to be some philological evidence also appealing to the ear. The nomenclature of the letters of many of the Western alphabets seem to be fossilised mutilations or corruptions of the Sanskrit words that are contained, as names of alphabetical letters, in

⁴⁷ Pp. 390-91, Vol. III., J. A. S. B., 1839.

GREEK.

Plate X.

INDIAN.

A	A	H	ॠ	
B	Β	□	ॡ	v.b
Γ	Γ	7	Π	
Δ	D	δ	Ο	dh.
E	E	?	zend ε	
Z	Z	H	Η	s
H	H	7	□	i
Θ	Θ	Θ		
I	I	†	i	
k	k	†	†	
Λ	Λ	✓	✓	
M	Μ	X	X	
O	O	δ	ω	
Π	Π	U	U	
P	P	J	J	
ε	ε	ε	ε	
τ	τ	u	u	
x		x?		

the two stanzas of the *Tripuropanishad*. These two stanzas are believed to be the earliest source of not only the two varieties of the *mantras*, sacred to Sakti, but also of the Devanāgarī Alphabet. The eleventh verse of the *Upanishad* contains the names of the fifteen letters composing the *mantra* chanted by Manu, and the thirteenth those of the *mantra* believed to have been recited by Lopāmudrā, a woman of Puranic fame. The verses run as follows : —

कामी योनिः कमला वज्रपाणिः
गुहा ह सा मातरिश्वाभिमित्रः ।
पुनर्गुहा स क ला मायया च
पुरुच्छेषा⁴⁸ विद्वन्माता विविद्योम् ॥

‘(i) *ka* (*kāma*), *e* (*yonī*), *ī* (*kamala*), *la* (*vajrapāṇi*), and *hrīm* (*guhā*); (ii) *ha*, *sa*, *ka* (*mātariśvā*), *ha* (*abhrām*), *la* (*indra*) and *hrīm* (*guhā*); (iii) and *sa*, *ka*, *la* and *hrīm*. This first and most ancient *mantra* (*vidyā*) is the mother of the world.’

षष्ठं सप्तमथ वह्निसारथि
चास्या मूलत्रिकमावेशयन्तः
कथ्यं कवि कल्पकं काममीशं
तुष्टवांसोऽमृतत्वं भजन्ते ॥

‘Replacing the first three (letters) of the above *mantra* by the sixth (*ha*), the seventh (*sa*) and (*ka*) (*vahnīśrathī*, air) and extolling (the god) as Praiseworthy, Poet, Love and Lord of the Universe, some other devotees attain to heavenly bliss.’

Almost all Tantric scholars are unanimous in taking the words *mātariśvā* and *abhra* in the above passage to mean *ka* and *ha*. But, as has already been seen, *ya* is the letter sacred to air and *va* to water or clouds. Accordingly, there appears to be some confusion in the interpretation of the stanzas, due, perhaps, to the use of the same or synonymous words, such as *guhā* (used twice) and *vajrapāṇi* and *indra* to imply different letters. It is perhaps due to the use of such similar or synonymous words that of the fifteen or twenty-two letters of the two *mantras*, all of which might probably have been originally distinct, there are now only seven or eight, including the *anusvāra*, nasal sound, distinct letters or syllables. It is not, however, possible to find out the particular letters which are implied by the several words in the verses. Though I am not free from misgivings that the analogy between the words of the above verses and those of the names of the letters of Western alphabets, as fancied by me, may not only clash with rules of philology of which I possess little knowledge, but also be inconsistent with the history of the Western alphabets, still I risk here comparison as a matter of curiosity :—

Sem.	...	.....	ayin	gimel	van zayin cheth
San.	...	kāmah	yonih	kamala	vajra pāṇih (hastah)
Greek	...	.....	.....	gamma	vau zeta eta

Sem.	...	he	tau resh	lamed
San.	...	guhā	hasāmātariśva-	bhramindrah
Greek	...	.....	sigma tau (rho ?)	lambda

Sem.	...	nan	samekh
San.	...	punrguhā	sakalā māyayā cha
Greek	...	nu	xi

⁴⁸ पृथकोशः पुनः कोशाः पृथक्कोशाः are other readings. See Commentary on stanzas 17 and 32 ; *Saundaryalahari*, M. O. L. Ed.

<i>Sem.</i>	...	pe tsode shin	qoph men theth yod	
<i>San.</i>	...	purûchyesh â	visvamatâdividyom	
<i>Greek</i>	...	pi (rho ?) san	quppa mu theta iota	
<i>Sem.</i>	...	cheth	mem he	va zayin
<i>San.</i>	...	shastham	saptamamatha	vahnîsârathim
<i>Greek</i>	...	zeta	eta mu he	.....
<i>Sem.</i>	...	samekh	ayin	
<i>San.</i>	...	châsyâ	mûlatrikamâvesayantah	
<i>Greek</i>	...	.....	.....	
<i>Sem.</i>	...	.....	quph	kaph gimel
<i>San.</i>	...	kathyam	kavim	kalpakam kâmamîsam
<i>Greek</i>	...	.....	quppa	kappa gamma
<i>Sem.</i>	...	tsade samekh	.....	Pe shin tau
<i>San.</i>	...	tushthuvâmsô'	mriatvam	bhajante
<i>Greek</i>	...	.....	.....	.....

The words *aleph* and *beth* appear to be the corruptions of *lipi* and *bhûta*, *bhûta-lipi* being the name of the Devanâgarî.

Also there seems to be in the following passages of the *Akshamâlopanishad* (an *Upanishad* treating of the letters from *a* to *ksha*) some historic significance regarding the westward migration of the Devanâgarî : —

मन्त्रमादके अक्षमाले नयन्तरं यासि. देशान्तरं
यासि. द्वीपान्तरं यासि. लोकान्तरं यासि. सर्वश
स्फुरसि. सर्वहृदि वासयसि. नमस्ते.

'O picture of the mother, forming the letters of the *mantras* : O series of the letters from *a* to *ksha*, thou crossdest the river, migrateest to other countries, travelest to other islands, goest to other worlds, always displayest thyself, and causest us (letters) to abide in the hearts of all ; salutation to thee.'

The river referred to in the passage seems to be the Indus, inasmuch as the formation of the alphabet must have taken place in the plains of the Indus or the Ganges.

Transliteration of Sanskrit Passages.

Âkâsamandalam dhûmram vartulam parikirtitam
Shatkoṇamandalam vâyoh Kṛishṇashaḍbindulâñchhitam
Sasvastikam trikoṇam tu raktam vahnestu mandalam
Ardhachandramatisvachchham padmadvayavirâjitam
Âpyamandalamâkhyâtam chaturaśram maheshvari
Ashṭavajrayutam pîtam dharâmandalamîshvari
Tattadbijasamâyuktam mandalam pûjayetkramât
Tattadvarnena nirmâya dravyeṇa parameśvari

Padābhyām jānuparyantam chaturaśram savajrakam Jānvorānābhi chandrardhanibham padmadvayasamāyutam Nābhitaḥ kaṇṭhaparyantam kṛishṇam vāyostu maṇḍalam Bhṛūmadhyādbrahmarandhrāntam vartulam dhvajalāñchhitam	P. 256
Sthirebhiraṅgaih pururūpa ugrah Babhuśśukrebhiḥ pipīṣe hiraṇyaih	P. 257
Nu manvānāḥ eśhām dēvān ascha	P. 257
Brahmāṇḍādikatāhāntām tām vande siddhamāṭṛikām Yadekādaśanādhāram bijam koṇatrayātmakam	P. 258
Trikoṇarupā yonistu Śaktirekādaśasthāne sthitvā sūte jagattrayam Viśvayoniriti khyātā sā viśṇordaśarūpakam	P. 258
Bindudvayāntare daṇḍāśśivarūpo maṇiprabhaḥ	P. 258
Aṇḍadvayamadhyavartini sīrā	P. 258
Aṇḍadvayasthānīyau dvau bindū sīrāsthānīyā rekḥā. Sivo mushka-dvaya- madhyavartī nādīmaṇiḥ padmarāga iti sāmpradāyiki vyākhyā	P. 259
Sivaśśaktiḥ kāmah kshitiratha raviśśītakiraṇah Smaro hamsastadanu cha parāmāraharayah Ami hrillekhābhīstisribhiravasāneshu ghatitāḥ Bhajante varṇāste tava janani nāmāvayavatām	P. 259
Na vihitamanadātmā tāntradhīdarśikīrtiḥ Avinataphalasāttā vikramaṇa kramaṇa	P. 260
Sadārcbitaskandarudrārkanetuh Mahesapṛitaguptah Satatam sevate mūrtimimām yaśchātra bhūpatih Rudreṇendreṇadya dese sa mataḥ prañayapanyadhīram	P. 260
Śrisāmkkhyāyanakalpasūtravidhibhiḥ karmāṇi ye kurvate Yeshām śākalasūtramantranichayah kauśītaki Brāhmaṇam Tairārādhakamadhyamantravitatiḥ yā paṭhyate bahvrichaiḥ Ṛigbhishodaśābhirmahopanishadam vyāchakṣhmahe tām vayam	P. 261
Dvā maṇḍalā dvā stanā bimbamekam Mukham chādhastrīṇi guhāsadanāni Kāmikalām kāmārūpām viditvā Naro jāyate kāmārūpaścha kāmah	P. 261
Bhagaśśaktirbhagavān kāma īśah Ubhā dātārāviha saubhagānām Samapradhānau samasatvau samotayoh Samaśaktirajarā viśvayonih	P. 261

Vishṇuryonim kalpayatu
Tvashtā rūpāṇi pimsatu
Āsinchatu prajāpatih
Dhātā garbham dadhātu te

P. 261

Ashtā chakrā navadvārā devānām pūrayodhyā
Tasyām hiraṇyah kosah svargo jyotishāvritah
Tasmin hiraṇyaye koṣe tryare tripratishthite
Tasminyadyekāksham ātmanvaitat tadvai Brahmavido viduh
Puram hiraṇyayim Brahma āviveśāparājītām

P. 262

Chaturbhiṣṣivachakraischa śaktichakraischa panchabhiḥ |
Navachakraischa samsiddham Śrichakram Sivayorvapuh |
Trikoṇamashtakoṇam cha daśakoṇadvayam tathā |
Chaturdaśāraṇ chaitāni śaktichakrāṇi pancha cha |
Binduśchāshtadalam padmam padmam shodaśapattrakam |
Chaturāśram cha chatvāri Sivachakrāṇyānukramāt |

P. 263

Trikōṇe baindavasthāne adhovaktram vichintayet |
Bindoruparibhāge tu vaktram samchintya Sādhakah |
Taduparyeva vakshojadvitayam samsmaredbudhah |
Taduparyeva yonim cha kramaśo bhuvaneśvarim |

P. 263

Padmam chaturdaśadalam bahirvṛttadvyam tathā |
Likhitvā karṇikāmadhye yonim mayodarām likhet |
Daleshvapi tathā śakteśchaturdaśasu samlikhet |
Bhagamālāma madhyaśaktyāmāvāhyābhyarchayedbudhah

P. 264

Mūlādhārādishatkamūrdhvhādhassahasradalakamale dye lambikāgramiti
navādhārāh

P. 264

Śrotrachakshurnāsānām dvayam dvayam jihvā-guhya-pāyava ekaika iti

P. 264

Pratikṛitimāvalekhinim dārbhūsbheṇa Bhangajyena
Kantakaśalyayolūkapattrayā sitālukāṇḍayā hṛdaye viddhyati

P. 270

Sapta maryādā ityuttarato' gnessapta lekhā likhati prāchyah

P. 271

Vāchā baddhāya bhūmi-parilekham

P. 271

Ajaisham tvā samlikhitamajaishamuta samrudham
Avim vṛiko yathā mathadevā mathnāmi te kṛitam

P. 271

Likedrochanayaikānte pratimāmayanitale |
Svarūpam Chātra Śṛṅgārareshābharaṇabhūshitām |
Tatphālagalabrinnābhijānumamanḍalajitām |
Janmanāma mahāvidyāmankuśāntavidarbbhitām |
Sarvāṅgasandhisamlinamālikhya madanāksharam |

P. 271

Likhitvā vipulam cakram tanmadhye pratimām yadi |
 Nāmnā likhati samyuktām jvalantīm chintayettatah |
 Satayojanamātrasthā tvadṛisyāpi cha yā bhavet |
 Bhayalajjāvinirmuktā sāpyāyāti vimohitā |

Kṛitvā sindūrarajasā cakram tatra vibhāvayet

P. 272

Madhye phālam bindurdīpa ivābhāti vārtulākārah |
 Tadupari tatordhachandro' nvarthah kāntyā tathakṛityā |
 Atha rodhinī tadūrdhvam trikoṇarūpā cha Chandrikākāntih |
 Nādistu Pādmārāgavadāṇḍadvayamadyavartini sīrā |
 Nādistassavyasthitabinduyuktalāṅgalavat |
 Tiryagbindudvitaye vāmodgachchhatsirakṛitiśśaktih |
 Bindūdgaachchhattryaśrākārātha vyāpikā proktā |
 Ūrdhvādhobindudvitayayutarekhākṛitissamanāh |
 Saivordhva-binduhinonmanāstadūrdhvam mahābinduh |

P. 272

Ghoshō medhā kshamākhyo vishamatha cha tataśchetanā Chandrakhaṇḍah
 Tryaśram dṛigvṛittasiro' ruṇakiraṇaḥalassendusīrakrameṇa |
 Vṛittārkastrisīkham dvibimbakalitā rekhā dvikubjonmananāh
 Sākāram manasā smaredapi kalāh pratyekamarchyāśśīve ||
 Ghoshah 'Sivabījo hakārah. Medhā akārah, kshamā lakārah, Visham makārah,
 tatah chetanā binduh

P. 277

'Chandrakhaṇḍo' rdhachandrah. Tryaśrm trikoṇam nirodhi. dṛigvṛittasīrah
 dṛigvṛittābhyām yuktassīrah. Anena nāda ūchyate. Aruṇakiraṇaḥalah aruṇakiraṇaḥ
 ādityah dakṣiṇapārsvabinduh tadyukto halah. Anena nādistasya grahaṇam.
 Sendusīrah Vāmapārsvabinduyukta-sīrah. Anena Śaktikalāyāh prastāro darśitah.
 Vṛittārkastrisīkham dakṣiṇabinduyuktatridaṇḍah trisūlam vā. Atha dvibimbakalitā
 dvikubjā rekhā dakṣiṇavāma-bindudvayayuktā dvivakrā rekhā samanah kalā.
 binduvilasadṛijurekhākṛitiunmonāh kalā.

P. 278

Sivamekam vijāntiyanmantramurtim param Sivam
 Nādam kiritamityuktam bindurvaktramudāhṛitam
 Hakāram dehamityuktam dvayau tungau bhujau tathā
 Vahnipādadvayam vidyāt mantramūrtirudāhṛitā |

P. 279

Hṛillekhāyāśśvarūpam tu vyomāgnirvāmalocanam |
 Bindvardhachandrarodbhinyo nādanadāntaśaktayah |
 Vyāpikāsamanānumanya iti dvādaśasamlratih
 Bindvādīnām navānām tu samashtirnūda uchyate

P. 279

Sivamantrānmūrtiyuddhārakṛitih nāgaralipibhiruddhārayitum yujyate. Vyatiriktalipibhirnoddhā-
 ayirtum yujyate.

P. 279

Vastutaśśarirē' pi traya evāvayavāh. 'Sīrshādikanṭhāntam kanṭhādistanāntam bṛidayādisiva-
 nyantam. Keśapaṇipādam tattachchhākāh.

P. 280

Sṛiṇyeva sitayā viśvacharṣiṇih
 Paśena pratibadhnātyabbhikāu
 Ishubhih pañchabhirdhanushā oha
 Viddhyatyūdiśaktiraruṇā viśvajanyā ||

P. 280.

Dvidhā sṛiṇirbhavati bhartā cha hantā cha

P. 280

Rijurekhāmayī viśvasthitau prathitavigrahā |
Tatsamhṛitidaśāyām tu bairavānam rūpamāśritā
Pratyāvṛittikrameṇaivam Śṛṅgātavapurujjvalā |

Viśvasisṛikshāvaśatassvārdhām śaktim vyalokayadbrahmā
Bindurbhavati tamindum pravīṣati Saktistu raktabindutayā
Etadbindudvitayam visargasamjnam hakāraohaitanyam ||

P. 280

Sphuṭitādaruṇādbindornādabrahmāṅkuro vyaktah
Tasmādgagauśamīraṇadabanodakabhūmivarṇasambhūtiḥ
Etatpanchakavikritih jagadidamandaprajāṇḍaparyantam,

P. 280

Yatsamudre abhyakrandat
Parjanya vidyutā saha |
Tato hiraṇyayo binduh
Tato darbho ajāyata ||

P. 281

Sādhakasya cha lakṣhyārtham tasya rūpamidam smṛitam

P. 281

Ākāravāmschenniyamādupāsyah
Na vastvanākāramupaiti buddhih |

P. 282

Kasmai devāya | kasmai kāya prajāpataye devāya | Prajāpatirvā kah | tasmai
devaya havish Vidhema |

P. 282

Nirañjano' kāmavenojjrimbhate | A-ka-cha-ṭa-ta-pa-ya-śān sṛijate |
tasmādiśvarah kāmō' bhidhiyate tatparibhāshayā | kāmah kakāram Vyāpnoti | kāma
evedam tattaditi kakāro gṛihyate

P. 282

Koṇatrayavadudbhavo lekho yasya tat
Nāgaralipyām Sāmpradāyikairekārasya trikoṇākāratayaiva lekhanāt.

P. 282

Savitā prāṇinassūte | Prasūte Saktih | Sūte tripurā | Saktirādyeyam tripurā
Paramēśvarī Mahākundilī devī | jātavedasamaṇḍalam yo' dhīte sarvam Vyāpyate |
trikoṇasaktirekareṇa mahābhāgena prasūte | tasmādekāra eva gṛihyate | Varenṇyam
śreṣṭham bhajanīyamaksharam namaskāryam | tasmādvarenṇyamekāśharam gṛihyate |

P. 283

Tatturīyasvarupam tu bindutrāyāmitīritam |
Tadātmavānam tu devyāste Sādhakena cha yadbhavet |
Tadbhāvanām sruṇu prājñe mahodaykarīm śubhām |
Ūrdhva-bindvātmakam Vaktramadhobindudvayātmakam |
Kuchadvayam cha tachchheshaiśśeshāṅgāni cha bhāvayet.

P. 283

Pādādi jānuparyantam chaturaśram savajrakam |
Bhūbijam cha svarṇavarṇam smaredavanimaṇḍalam |
Jānvadyānābhi Chandrārdha nibham padmadvayāṅkitam |
Vambijayuktam Svetābhamambhasām maṇḍalam smaret |
Nābherbhṛidayaparyantam trikoṇam Svastikānvitam |
Rambijena yutam raktam smaretpāvakaṇḍalam |
Hṛido bhrūmadhyaparyantam Vṛittam shadbindulāñchhitam |
Yambijayuktam dhūmrābham maruto maṇḍalam smaret |
Ābrahmarandhram bhrūmadhyāt Vṛittam svachchhamanoharam |
hambijayuktamākāsamandalam pravichintayet.

P. 283

Pp. 285-286

Vasundharāgato gandbastallipirgandhavāchakah |
 Vasundharāyah prithivyā guṇo gandhah.
 tallipih prithivivāchako varṇo lakārah

P. 286

Vākāram Vāruṇam hyāpaschatrtham medasi sthitam |
 Jalasya yāni nāmāni santi tānyaparāṇi cha |
 Vakārasyaṇi nāmāni

P. 286

Dipāgrasthitakajjalalekhāvat

P. 287

Vāyubijam smaranvāyūm sampūryemam viśoshayet |
 Svaśarīrayutam mantri vahnibijena nirdahet |
 Bahirbhasma samutsārya vāyubijena rechayet

P. 287

Prithivyādini bījāni lavarayahakārakāl

P. 287

Pāsam chāpam srakkapāle sṛṇiśhūn
 Sūlam hastairbibhratīm raktavarṇām
 Raktodanvatpotaraktāmbujasthām
 Devīm dhyāyetprāṇāsaktim triṇetrām |

P. 288

Vakshye' dhunā manostasyoddhāram dhyātṛisukhāvaham |
 Pāsam māyām sṛṇim procha yādinsaptendusamyutān |
 Tārānitam nabhasaptavarṇam mantram tato jayet |

P. 288

Khadgam Chakragadeshuchāpaparighān sūlam bhuśundīm śirah
 Saṅkham sandadhatīm karaistṛiṇayanām sarvāṅgabhūshāvitām |
 Yāmastautsvapite barau kamalajo hantum madhum kaitabham
 Nilāsmadyutimāsyapādadaśanām seve mahākālikām
 Akshasrakparaśugadeshukulīśam padīnam dhanuḥ kuṇḍikām
 daṇḍam śaktimasim cha charma jalajam ghaṇṭām surābhājanam |
 Sūlam pāśasudarśane cha dadhatīm hastaiḥ pravālaprabhām
 Seve sairibhamardinimihā mahālakṣmīm suraujodbhavām |

P. 289

Akāram cha ikāram cha ukāram cha ṛikārakam |
 Likāram chaiva ekāram tathaiṣvaṅkārāmeva cha |
 Ete sapta svarāḥ proktāḥ prakṛitistu samirītāḥ |
 Seshāstu vikṛitih proktāḥ teshāmudbhavamuchyate |
 Akarāchchodbhavākāram ikāre tvīsamudbhavah |

P. 311

Dvividhā hi madhyamā sā sūkshma sthūlākṛitissthirā sūkshma |

P. 312

Navanādamayī sthūlā navavargātmā tu bhūtalipyākhyā |

P. 312.

Devānām bījanāmāni varṇastatra prakalpītāḥ |
 Tasmādivarṇāni choktāni jñātvā mantram samuddharet
 Tattaddevatānamabhidhanāksharameva tattaddevatānāmangam bhavati.

P. 312

Amṛitā, Ākarshīṇi, Indrāṇi, Isānti, Umā, Ūrdhvakesīni, Riddhiḥ, Rishā,
 Līṭā, Līshā, Ekapādīni, Aīśvari, Omkāriṇi, Aushadhātmikā, Ambikā, Aksharātmikā,
 Kālarātri, Khātītā, Gāyatrī, Ghaṇṭādhārīni, Nārṇātmikā, chandā, chhāya, jayā,
 Jhankārīṇi, Jñānarūpā, Ṭankahastā, Ṭhankārīni, Ḍamarī, Ḍhankārīṇi, Ṇamīni,

Pp. 314-315

Tâmasî, Thâminî, Dâkshâyânî, Dhâtrî, Nandâ, Pârvatî Phatkârinî Bandhinî,
Bhadrakâlî, Mahâkâya, Yâsâsvinî, Raktâ, Lamboshîbî, Varadâ, Śaśinî, Shandâ,
Sarasvatî, Hamsavatî, Kshamâvatî, —

Akarâdikshakârântavarṇâvayavasundarīm

P. 315

Panchâsannijadehajâksharabhavairnanâvidhairdhâtubbiḥ

bahvarthaiḥ padavâkyamânajanakairarthâvinâbhâvitaiḥ |

Sâbhiprâyavadarthakarmaphaladaiḥ khyâtniranantairidam

Viśvam vyâpya chidâtmanâhamahamityujjrimbbase mâtṛike H

Namo bammiye lippîye

P. 315

P. 315

Mantramâtṛike Akshamâlâ nadyantaram yâsi, desântaram yâsi, dvîpântaram yâsi,
lokântaram yâsi, sarvadâ sphurasi, Sarvabhîdi vâsayaḥ. namaste.

P. 318



वाल्मीकि विद्यापीठ पुस्तकालयः

प्रत्यावर्तनतिथिः

HISTORY
THE OR
DEVANAG

5